



# Air passenger experience of security screening: 2018

## About this release

This statistical release summarises results from a set of four questions about passengers' attitudes to security screening, which were included in the Civil Aviation Authority Departing Passenger Survey in 2018.

Over 20,000 respondents from this survey were asked about their experience of security screening at five airports: Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and Manchester.

## How to interpret results

Any differences over time or between groups described in this publication are statistically significant at the 5% level (i.e. it is 95% certain that the difference exists in the passenger population at the surveyed airports).

## In this publication

Overall findings .....	p1
Satisfaction with experience of security screening .....	p2
Perceived queuing times ....	p2
Aspects of security screening .....	p3
Acceptance of inconvenience caused by security screening .....	p3
Individual airport results .....	p4
Background information .....	p9
Annexes .....	p11

## Overall findings



In 2018 the majority (85%) of air passengers surveyed said they were very satisfied or satisfied with their **experiences of security screening**. Three per cent said they were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied, remaining at a similar level to 2017.



The **aspects of security screening** with which passengers were least satisfied were:

- queuing (cited by 5%)
- general organisation (4%)
- slow speed of screening process (3%)
- staff attitude/politeness (3%)

The majority of passengers (79%) said there was no aspect with which they were least satisfied.



The average time passengers reported that they spent **queuing for security screening** was 7.5 minutes, ranging from 3.7 minutes at Gatwick to 13 minutes at Manchester.



Over 90% of passengers strongly agreed or agreed that any **inconvenience caused by the security screening process was acceptable**.

Acceptance of inconvenience and average perceived queuing time at the five airports combined in 2018 were similar to results reported in 2017, although there were some differences at individual airports. Results for individual airports are presented in the next pages, alongside the corresponding characteristics of passengers travelling at the surveyed airport.



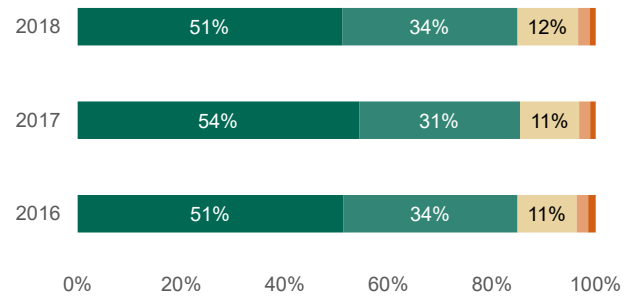


## Satisfaction with experience of security screening

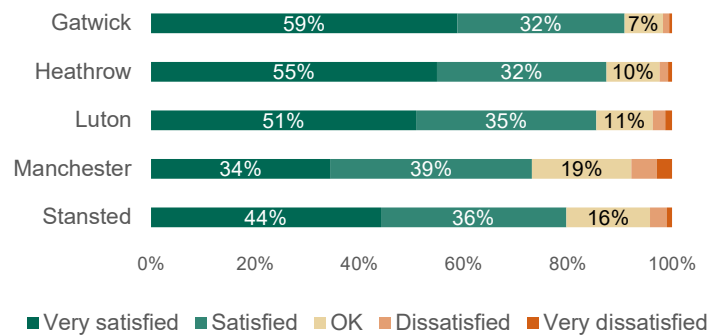
Table C2a

- The majority (85%) of respondents surveyed in 2018 at the five airports combined said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their experience of security screening, with over a half (51%) saying they were very satisfied.
- A lower proportion of passengers were very satisfied in 2018 when compared to 2017, although overall levels of satisfaction remained at a broadly similar level between 2017 and 2018.
- Gatwick reported highest number of very satisfied or satisfied passengers for the third consecutive year. The highest proportions of very dissatisfied or dissatisfied passengers were served at Manchester.

Satisfaction with experience of security screening: Five airports combined, 2016 - 2018



Individual survey airports, 2018



**Question:** How satisfied are you with your experience of the security screening used at the airport today?

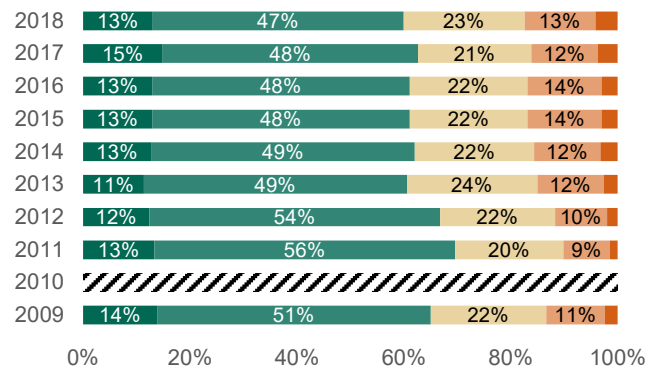


## Perceived queuing times

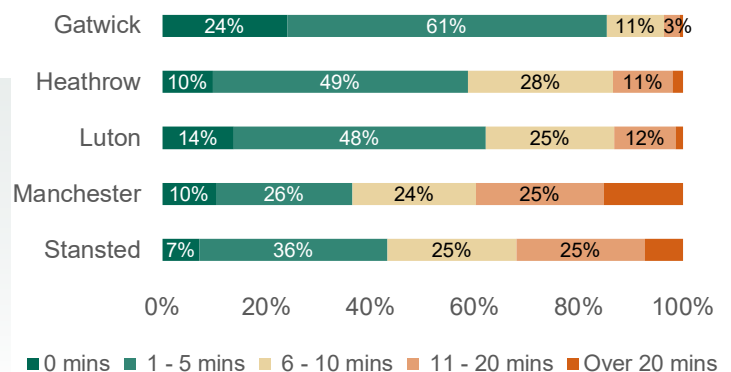
Table C4a

- The average queue time in 2018, based on passengers' estimates of how long they queued, was 7.5 minutes, which is in line with what was reported in the two preceding years. The majority (60%) of passengers surveyed said they queued for 5 minutes or less whilst 17% reported queuing for more than 10 minutes.
- The average perceived queuing time in 2018 ranged from 3.7 minutes at Gatwick, where 85% said they queued for 5 minutes or less, to 13 minutes at Manchester, where 37% said they queued for 5 minutes or less.

Perceived security screening queuing time (banded) based on passenger estimates: Five airports combined, 2009 - 2018



Individual survey airports, 2018



**Question:** For how long, in minutes, did you queue when waiting to be screened?

**Technical note:** Passengers tend to overestimate their queuing time so these figures are likely to be higher than actual times at these airports. However, they give some indication of relative queuing times between airports and the extent to which these have changed over time

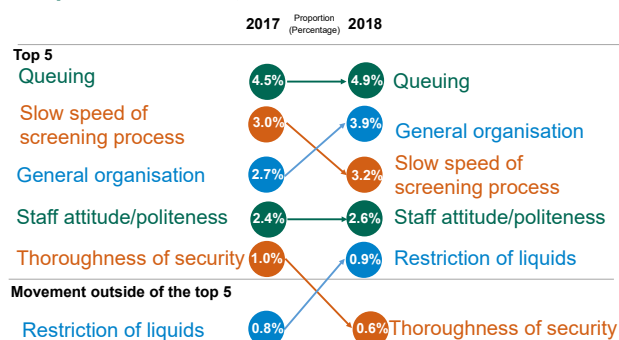


## Aspects of security screening

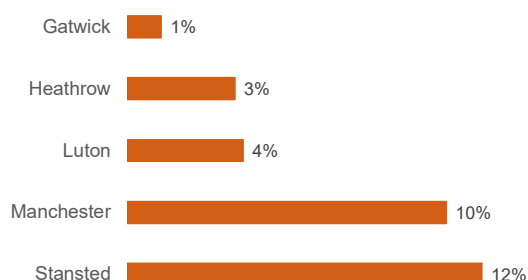
Table C2a

- When asked which aspect of security screening they were least satisfied with, the most common responses given by respondents were queuing (mentioned by 5%), general organisation (4%) and slow speed of screening process (3%). Furthermore, staff attitude/politeness was mentioned by three per cent of respondents.
- Just over a fifth (21%) of respondents identified a least satisfactory aspect of security screening.
- The proportion of passengers who identified a particular aspect with which they were least satisfied ranged from 12% at Gatwick to 39% at Stansted.

### Top 5 least satisfactory aspects of security screening: Five airports combined, 2017 - 2018



### Distribution of respondents reporting queuing as least satisfactory aspect: Individual survey airports, 2018



**Question:** What aspects of the security screening were you least satisfied with?

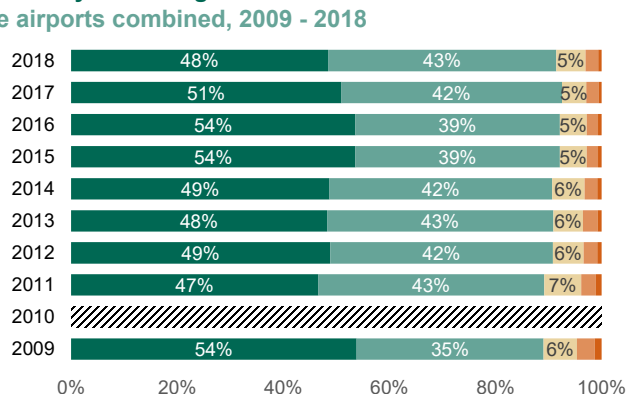


## Acceptance of inconvenience caused by security screening

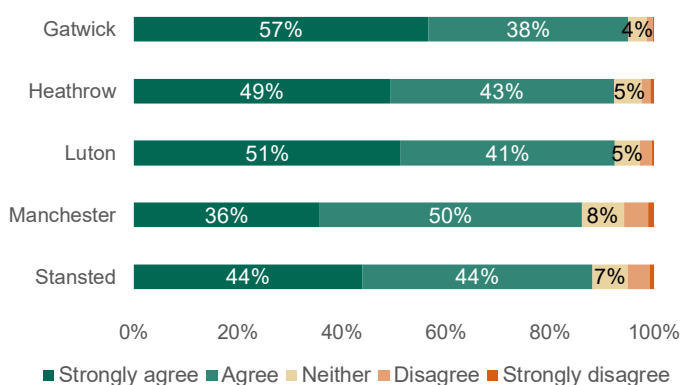
Table C5a

- A large majority (91%) of passengers agreed or strongly agreed that any inconvenience caused by security screening was acceptable.
- The proportion of passengers who disagreed or strongly disagreed has remained at a broadly similar level since 2012, at around 3 per cent.
- Agreement with the statement of acceptable inconvenience was highest at Gatwick (95% agreed or strongly agreed), where satisfaction with security screening was also the highest. Conversely, agreement with the statement was lowest at Manchester (86%), where satisfaction was also the lowest.

### Agreement with acceptability of any inconvenience caused by security screening: Five airports combined, 2009 - 2018



### Individual survey airports, 2018



**Question:** How strongly do you agree with the following statement: "Any inconvenience caused by the security screening was acceptable?"

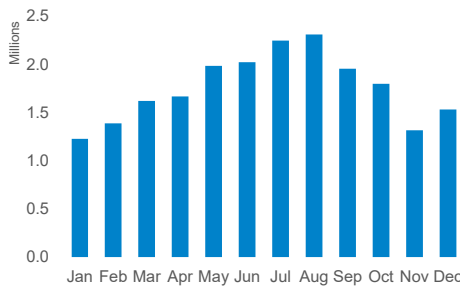
## Background airport information

Gatwick is second largest UK airport in terms of passengers handled, with nearly three-quarters (74%) of all passengers travelling to short-haul destinations.

Between 2013 and 2018, the number of annual passengers handled at Gatwick has increased by 30%.

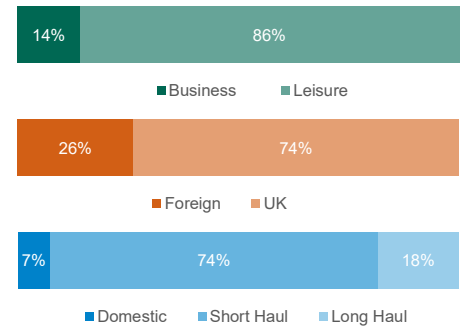
Source: Civil Aviation Authority Airports Data

Estimated number of passengers going through security screening at Gatwick, 2018



Source: DfT Analysis of Civil Aviation Authority Departing Passenger Survey Data 2018

Breakdown of passenger demographics at Gatwick, 2018



## Key airport findings

In 2018, Gatwick reported **significantly more** passengers being **very satisfied** with their experience of security screening than any other surveyed airport.



Among all surveyed airports in 2018, passengers at Gatwick were **more likely not to report** a least satisfactory aspect of the security screening process.

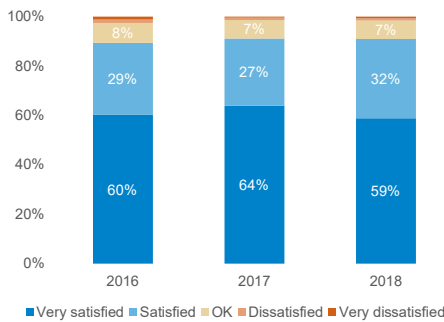


Significantly more people **agreed or strongly agreed** with the **statement of acceptable inconvenience** at Gatwick than any other airport.

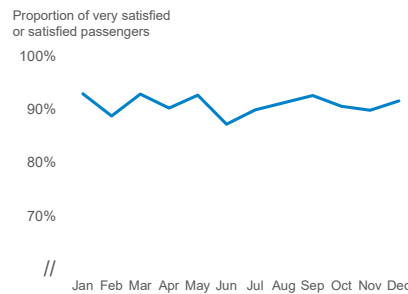


## Survey results

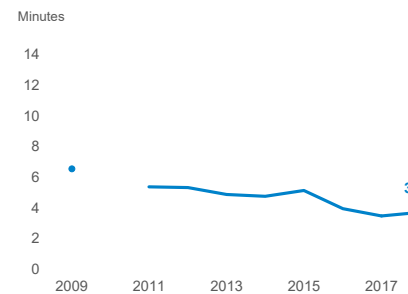
Satisfaction with security screening Annual, 2016 - 2018



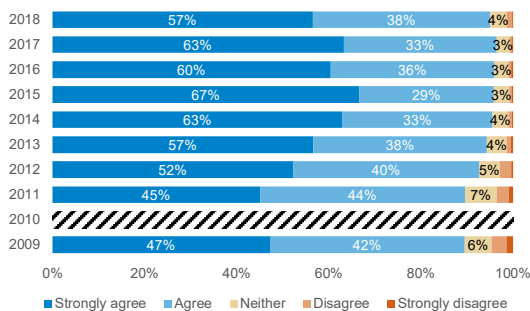
Monthly, 2018



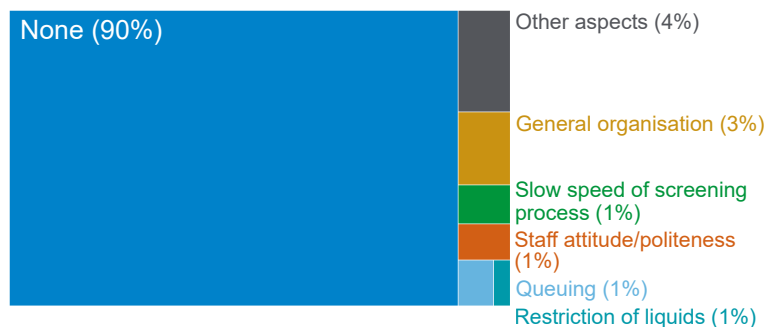
Average perceived queuing times



Agreement with statement of acceptable inconvenience



Least satisfactory aspect of security process



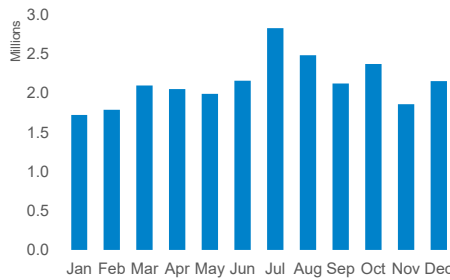
# Heathrow

## Background airport information

Heathrow is the largest UK airport in terms of passengers handled, with just over half of all passengers travelling to long haul destinations.

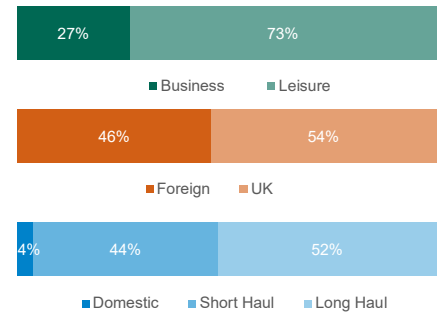
Heathrow attracted a large proportion of non-UK residents, and relative to other airports also had a higher proportion of business passengers.

Estimated number of passengers going through security screening at Heathrow, 2018



Source: DfT Analysis of Civil Aviation Authority Departing Passenger Survey Data 2018

Breakdown of passenger demographics at Heathrow, 2018



## Key airport findings

In 2018, Heathrow airport reported the **second largest** (after Gatwick) proportion of **very satisfied** passengers.



**Significantly more** passengers did not report a least satisfactory aspect of security screening at Heathrow than at **both** Manchester and Stansted.

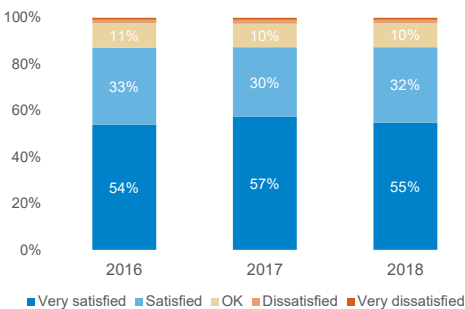


Passengers flying from Heathrow are **more likely** to be **neutral** towards security screening inconvenience than passengers at **Gatwick, Manchester and Stansted**.



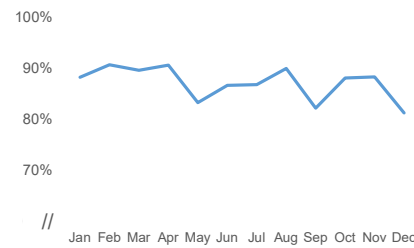
## Survey results

Satisfaction with security screening Annual, 2016 - 2018

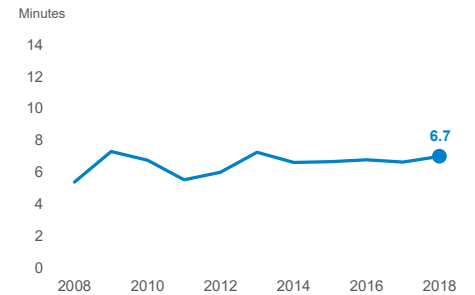


Monthly, 2018

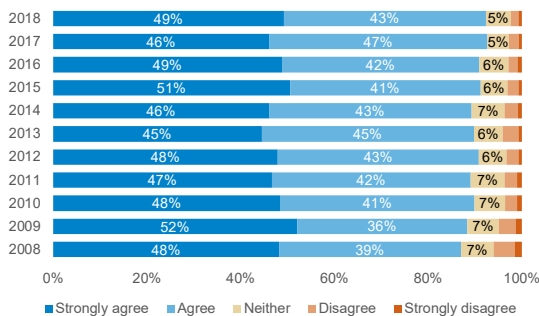
Proportion of very satisfied or satisfied passengers



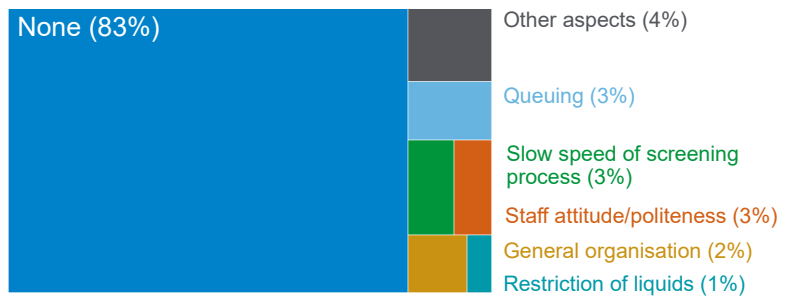
Average perceived queuing times



Agreement with statement of acceptable inconvenience



Least satisfactory aspect of security process

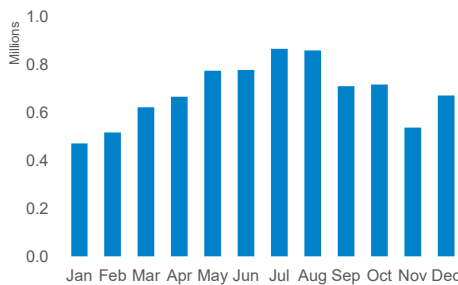


## Background airport information

Luton is the smallest of surveyed airports in terms of passengers handled, with vast majority of passengers travelling for leisure.

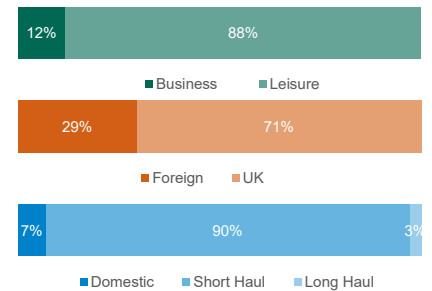
With nearly 90% of all passengers travelling to short-haul destinations, Luton attracted a significant proportion of foreign passengers.

Estimated number of passengers going through security screening at Luton, 2018



Source: DfT Analysis of Civil Aviation Authority Departing Passenger Survey Data 2018

Breakdown of passenger demographics at Luton, 2018



## Key airport findings

In 2018, Luton reported a similar proportion of **very or fairly satisfied** customers as Heathrow (significantly more than both Manchester and Stansted).



Since 2016 changes (see Annex B) to how options are being presented to respondents, significantly more people have been reporting **general organisation** as least satisfactory aspect of security screening.

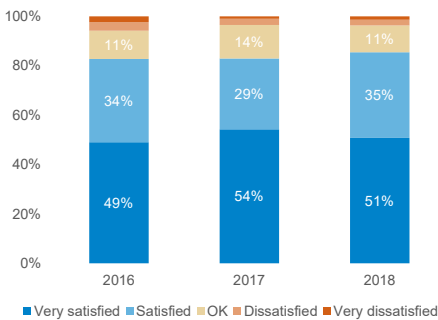


Significantly more people **strongly agreed** with the **statement of acceptable inconvenience** at Luton than both Manchester and Stansted.

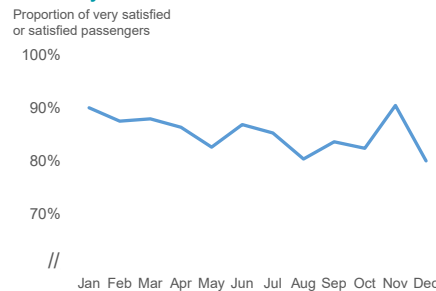


## Survey results

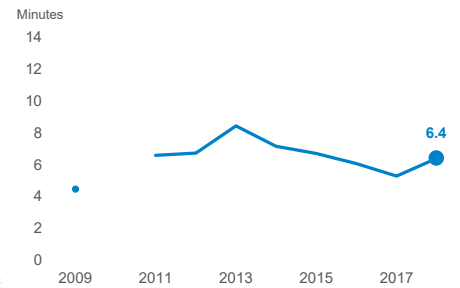
Satisfaction with security screening Annual, 2016 - 2018



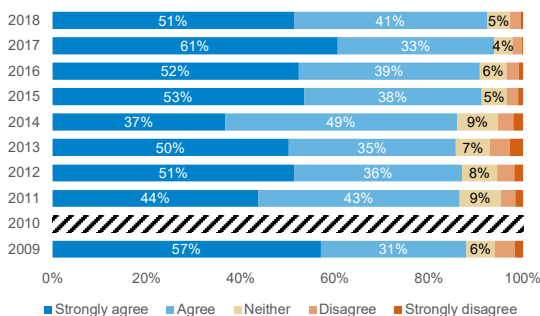
Monthly, 2018



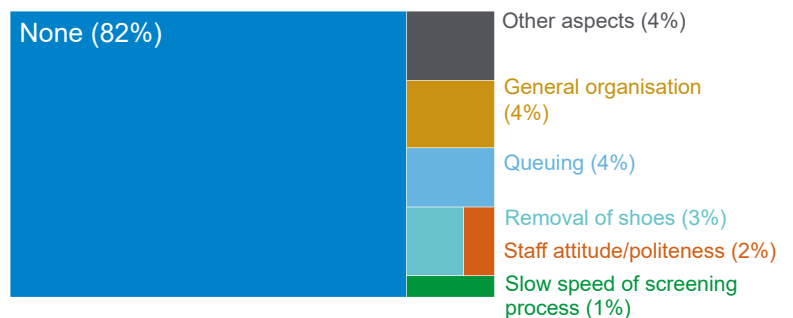
Average perceived queuing times



Agreement with statement of acceptable inconvenience



Least satisfactory aspect of security process



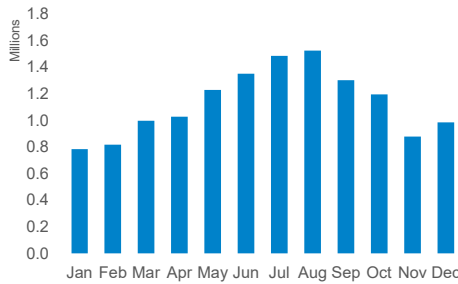
# Manchester

## Background airport information

Manchester is the busiest regional airport in the UK in terms of passengers handled, with around 20% of passengers travelling to long haul destinations.

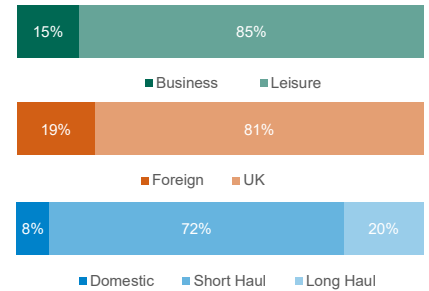
Also, it is the only airport in the UK (except Heathrow) to operate three terminals.

Estimated number of passengers going through security screening at Manchester, 2018



Source: DfT Analysis of Civil Aviation Authority Departing Passenger Survey Data 2018

Breakdown of passenger demographics at Manchester, 2018



## Key airport findings

In 2018, proportion of passengers who were **very or fairly dissatisfied** with security screening was **significantly larger** than at any other surveyed airport.



The proportion of people reporting **staff attitude/politeness** as the least satisfactory aspect of security screening at Manchester was the **largest** among all surveyed airports (5%).

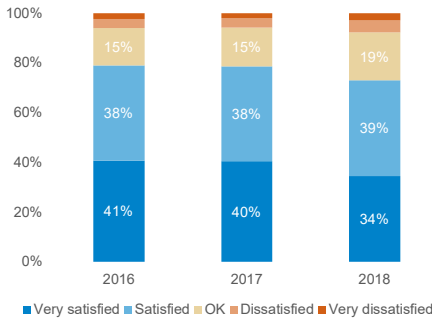


Significantly more people **disagreed or strongly disagreed** with the **statement of acceptable inconvenience** at Manchester than Gatwick, Heathrow and Luton.

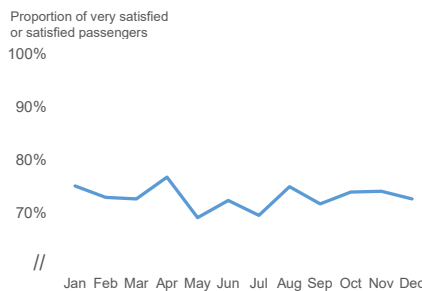


## Survey results

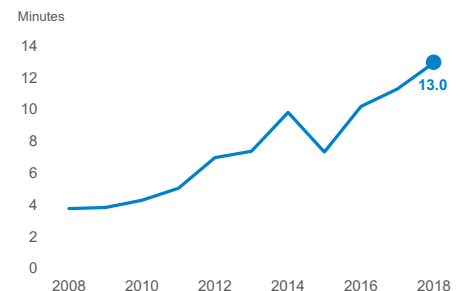
Satisfaction with security screening Annual. 2016 - 2018



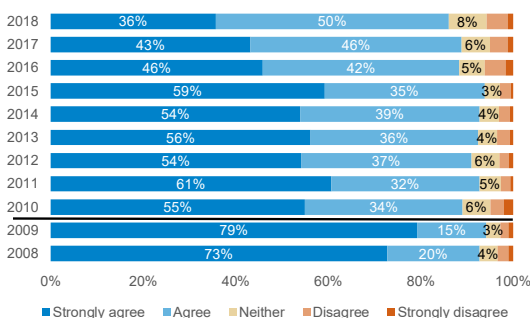
Monthly, 2018



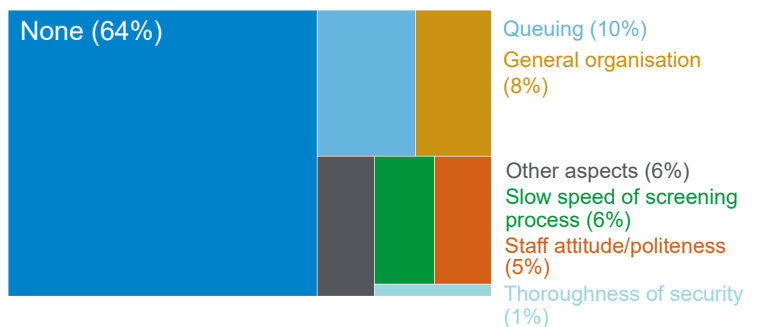
Average perceived queuing times



Agreement with statement of acceptable inconvenience



Least satisfactory aspect of security process

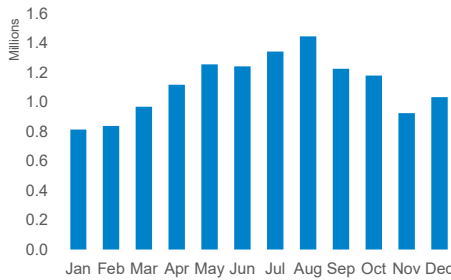


## Background airport information

Stansted reported the second largest year to year increase in passenger numbers among all surveyed airports.

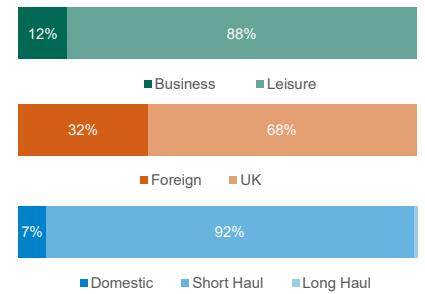
Over 90% of passengers at Stansted travel to short-haul destinations, attracting a considerable proportion of foreign passengers.

Estimated number of passengers going through security screening at Stansted, 2018



Source: DfT Analysis of Civil Aviation Authority Departing Passenger Survey Data 2018

Breakdown of passenger demographics at Stansted, 2018



## Key airport findings

In 2018, the proportion of passengers at Stansted who were **very or fairly satisfied** with security screening process **was larger** than at **Manchester** airport.



Among all surveyed airports in 2018, passengers at Stansted were the **most likely to report an aspect** of security screening that they were **least satisfied with**.

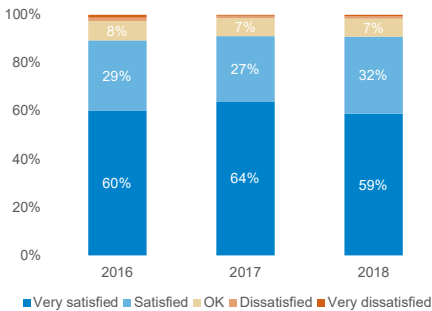


Significantly more people **disagreed or strongly disagreed** with the **statement of acceptable inconvenience** at Stansted than at Gatwick, Heathrow and Luton.

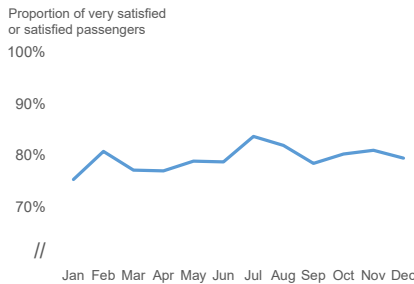


## Survey results

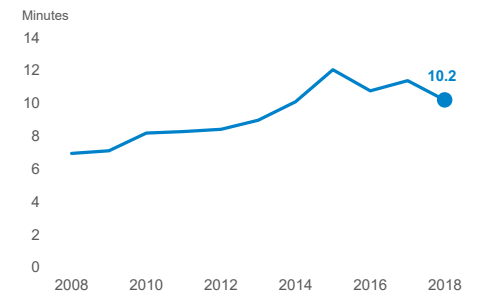
Satisfaction with security screening Annual, 2016 - 2018



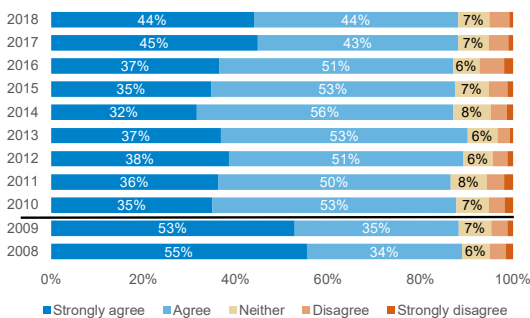
Monthly, 2018



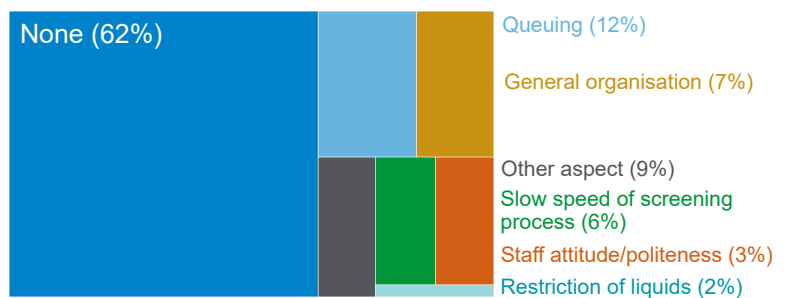
Average perceived queuing times



Agreement with statement of acceptable inconvenience



Least satisfactory aspect of security process





### Survey details

- The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Passenger Survey is undertaken to obtain information about air travellers that cannot be collected on a routine basis from the air transport industry. The survey includes questions on journey purpose, final and intermediate origins/destinations, means of transport to and from airports, route flown, country of residence and income.
- The CAA uses its own interviewers to conduct the survey and it runs continuously throughout the year at selected UK airports. Only departing passengers are interviewed. Additional information about the survey can be found at: <http://caa.co.uk/surveys>.
- In 2018, a set of four questions (see Annex A) relating to security screening was sponsored by the Department for Transport in order to monitor passengers' experiences at UK airports. The questions relate to the security screening used when the passenger enters the departure lounge. This covers the bag x-ray machine, the metal detector, and the body and bag searches.
- These questions were asked of a sub-sample of the passengers responding to the main CAA passenger survey at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and Manchester. The same set of questions was asked at Heathrow, Stansted, Manchester and Leeds Bradford in 2010 and at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and Manchester in 2011 to 2018. In 2008 and 2009 a longer set of questions on passenger experience was asked at a selection of airports including Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester; this included 3 of the 4 questions asked in 2010 to 2015.
- At the beginning of 2016 there were changes to the way in which passengers' responses were recorded with a transition from paper to an electronic device. The transition affected two out of four questions and, in turn, determines how results are presented in this publication. All other aspects of the survey were unaffected.
  - "How satisfied are you with your experience of the security screening used at the airport today?" In 2016 the options available to respondents when answering this question were slightly rephrased. For this reason, summarised figures prior to 2016 are reported separately.
  - "What aspect of the security screening were you least satisfied with?" With the adoption of electronic devices in 2016, respondents started facing a wider range of possible answers, which in turn had an impact on reported answers. For this reason, summarised figures from 2016 onwards are reported separately.

### Analysis

- The questions relate to the security screening used when the passenger enters the departure lounge. This covers the bag x-ray machine, the metal detector, and the body and bag searches.
- Passengers who did not answer a particular question (either because they refused or said they did not know) have been excluded from the analysis of that question.
- Where sample sizes are sufficient, some changes over time are identified for the years when all five airports were included in the survey (2009 and 2011-18). Also as a result of the large sample size some small changes have been identified as they are statistically significant.
- Percentages quoted in the text, tables and charts have been rounded to the nearest final digit so, in some cases, there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the totals shown.
- Differences between airports, in terms of passenger profile, should be taken into account when interpreting the results and making comparisons between airports.

- Passengers' experiences of security screening may be affected by changes to screening procedures, such as the introduction of security scanners at Heathrow, Manchester, Gatwick and Stansted on a risk-assessed rollout which began in 2010.
- Security procedures may also be affected by passenger numbers, which increased at all five airports in 2018. Heathrow and Stansted handled over two million more passengers each in 2018 compared to 2017. Luton handled over half a million more passengers, whereas Gatwick and Manchester handled around half a million more each.

## Quality

- Official Statistics produced to the high professional standards set by the Code of Practice for Statistics. However, these statistics have not yet been assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation.
- Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found in the pre-release access list.

## Next edition

- The next edition of this publication is scheduled to be released in June 2020, and will cover results from the 2019 survey. In addition to Gatwick, Heathrow, Luton, Manchester and Stansted, the set of four questions relating to security screening will also be asked at Birmingham and London City.

## About DfT Statistics



To hear more about DfT statistics publications as they are released please follow us on Twitter via our @DfTstats account: <http://www.twitter.com/DfTstats>. TWITTER, TWEET, RETWEET and the Twitter logo are trademarks of Twitter, Inc. or its affiliates

- We would be grateful for any feedback that users have on this publication so that we can consider how the release can better meet user needs and how the dissemination of information can be improved.
- Within the Department for Transport the statistics are used:
  - For ministerial briefing
  - To answer public enquiries
  - As a background for policy development
- For any queries relating to the statistics presented in this release you can contact us by emailing:

**Annex A: CAA Survey module on security screening for 2018**

I would now like to ask you a few questions about your experience of the security screening used when you entered the departure lounge. That is the bag x-ray machine, the metal detector, and the body and bag searches.

1. How satisfied are you with your experience of the security screening used at the airport today?

[SHOWCARD 1]

.....

2. What aspect of the security screening were you least satisfied with?

**(Ask all passengers)**

[PROMPT CARD 1]

.....

3. For how long, in minutes, did you queue when waiting to be security screened? **[If say did not queue then put 0 minutes]**

.....

4. And how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement

**“Any inconvenience caused by the security screening was acceptable”**

[SHOWCARD 2]

.....

**End of questionnaire**

## Annex B: Publication timeline

LHR - Heathrow, LGW - Gatwick, STN - Stansted, LTN - Luton, MAN - Manchester, BRS - Bristol, EDI - Edinburgh, GLA - Glasgow, INV - Inverness, LBA - Leeds Bradford

Year	LHR	LGW	STN	LTN	MAN	BRS	EDI	GLA	INV	LBA	Changes to security screening	Survey design
2008	✓		✓		✓	✓						Survey module consists of 11 questions, some of which are open.
2009	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			
2010	✓		✓		✓					✓	Risk-assessed rollout of security scanners in February 2010 at UK airports, starting with LHR and MAN. Rest of the surveyed airports soon to follow.	Number of questions brought down to four; three of which same as in previous years (least satisfactory aspect being the new one).
2011–2012	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
2013	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				EDI and GLA not covered for the whole year (only from March).
2014 - 2015	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
2016	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							The options available to the respondents when answering 'satisfaction' question have been slightly rephrased. Prior to 2016, respondents who took their time answering were offered only an abridged set of answers to choose from. Adopting electronic devices in place of paper allowed interviewers to show a wider range of possible answers to the respondents.
2017	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							Introduction of limitations on electronic equipment allowed in the cabin of an airplane on flights between the UK and the following countries: Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Tunisia.
2018	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							