Air passenger experience of security screening: Results from CAA survey module (2010)

1. Key findings

1.1 Over 90% of passengers at each of the four airports surveyed in 2010 said they were very or fairly satisfied with their experiences at security screening.

1.2 The aspects of security screening with which passengers were least satisfied were:
- queuing (mentioned by 9%)
- removal of shoes (8%)
- restriction of liquids (5%).

The majority of passengers (61%) said there was no aspect with which they were least satisfied.

1.3 The average time spent passengers said they spent queuing for security screening ranged from 4.3 minutes at Leeds Bradford and Manchester to 6.8 minutes at Heathrow and 8.2 minutes at Stansted.

1.4 Overall, 13% of passengers at these four airports said they did not have to queue, half (50%) said they queued for 5 minutes or less and 2% said they queued for over 20 minutes.

1.5 The majority of passengers (89%) agreed that any inconvenience caused by the security screening was acceptable.

1.6 Among the three airports which were also surveyed in 2008 and 2009 (Heathrow, Manchester and Stansted), levels of satisfaction had improved slightly in 2010 compared with the previous two years, despite an increase in queuing time at Stansted and Manchester.

2. Introduction

2.1 In 2010, around 16,000 passengers at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Leeds Bradford were asked about their experiences of security screening. The survey questions covered:

- Satisfaction with security screening
- The least satisfactory aspect
- Estimated queuing time
- Acceptability of any inconvenience caused.

2.2 These questions were sponsored by the Department for Transport and were included in the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) passenger survey. The results are summarised here, together with results from similar surveys in 2008 and 2009. Detailed results for 2008 and 2009 are available on the Department's website.

2.3 The set of questions asked in 2010 is given in **Annex A**. As responses may be influenced by the passenger profile at each airport, an overview of passenger characteristics at the four airports surveyed in 2010 is given in **Annex B**. A detailed set of results for each question, including breakdowns by passenger and flight characteristics, is presented in **Annex C**.

Background information

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: **www.caa.co.uk/surveys**

In 2010, a set of four questions (see Annex A) relating to security screening was sponsored by the Department for Transport (DfT) in order to monitor passengers' experiences at UK airports. These questions were asked of a sub-sample of the passengers responding to the main CAA survey at Heathrow, Stansted, Manchester and Leeds Bradford. 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. In 2011, all four security questions are being asked at Heathrow, Stansted, Manchester, Gatwick, Luton, Birmingham and East Midlands.

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.

In 2008 Heathrow Terminal 4 passengers were not asked the questions on security screening as interviews were conducted prior to screening. In 2010 Heathrow Terminal 2 was not in operation.

Analysis

The responses have been weighted to reflect the actual distribution of passengers by flight destination (domestic, short-haul and long-haul).

Passengers who did not answer a particular question (either refused or said they didn't know) have been excluded from the analysis of that question.

Where sample sizes are sufficient, differences by flight and passenger characteristics have been examined. Similarly, where sample sizes permit, changes over time are identified for the three airports surveyed each year (Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester). However, due to the different subset of airports included each year, it is not possible to compare the overall results for 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Percentages may not add up to 100 in some tables due to rounding.

Differences between airports, in terms passenger profile, should be taken into account when interpreting the results and making comparisons between airports. A summary of key characteristics for each survey airport in 2010 is given in Annexes B and C.

Changes to security screening

Passengers' experiences of security screening may be affected by changes to screening procedures, such as the introduction of security scanners at Heathrow and Manchester from February 2010.

3. Results

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

3.1 A large majority (over 90%) of passengers said they were very or fairly satisfied with their experience at security screening. Over half the respondents at each airport said they were very satisfied.

3.2 Satisfaction was highest at Manchester airport, where 80% of respondents said they were very satisfied with their experience and a further 15% were fairly satisfied.

3.3 The proportion of satisfied passengers was slightly higher among those travelling for leisure purposes (94% very or fairly satisfied) than business travellers (90%) and among those on charter flights (97%) than on scheduled flights (92%).

3.4 There was an increase in the proportion of respondents who were satisfied with their experience of security screening in 2010 compared to 2009 at all three of the airports surveyed in both years (Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester).

**Table 1: Satisfaction with security screening, 2008-2010**

	Survey year	Very or fairly satisfied	Neither	Very or fairly dissatisfied	Unweighted sample size
Heathrow	2008	86%	8%	6%	4,876
Heathrow	2009	87%	8%	6%	6,220
Heathrow	2010	92%	5%	3%	6,154
Stansted	2008	87%	7%	6%	4,059
Stansted	2009	88%	7%	5%	4,458
Stansted	2010	91%	5%	4%	4,799
Manchester	2008	94%	3%	3%	3,854
Manchester	2009	94%	4%	3%	4,732
Manchester	2010	96%	2%	2%	4,270
Bristol	2008	86%	6%	8%	1,803
Gatwick	2009	87%	8%	5%	5,212
Luton	2009	87%	7%	6%	1,345
Edinburgh	2009	94%	3%	2%	2,688
Inverness	2009	89%	6%	5%	509
Leeds Bradford	2010	94%	3%	3%	1,059

Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2008 to 2010 – DfT module. Weighted results.

Figure 1a: Satisfaction with security screening: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2010
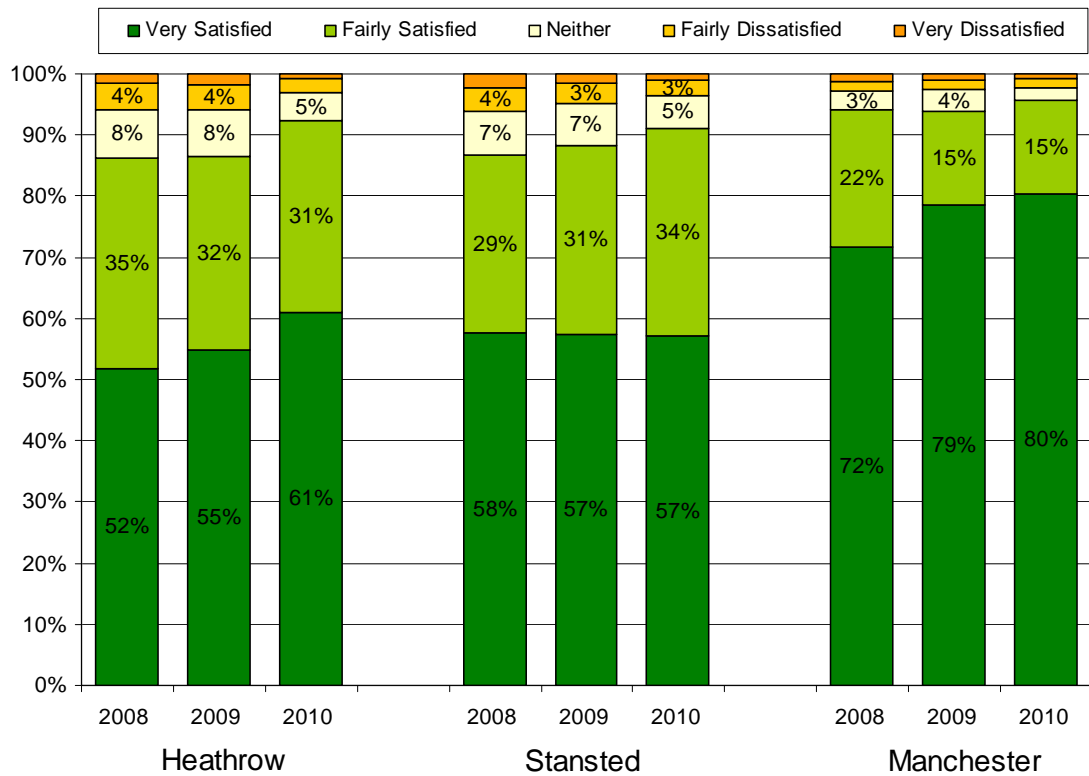
Figure 1b: Satisfaction with security screening: other airports surveyed in 2008, 2009 or 2010
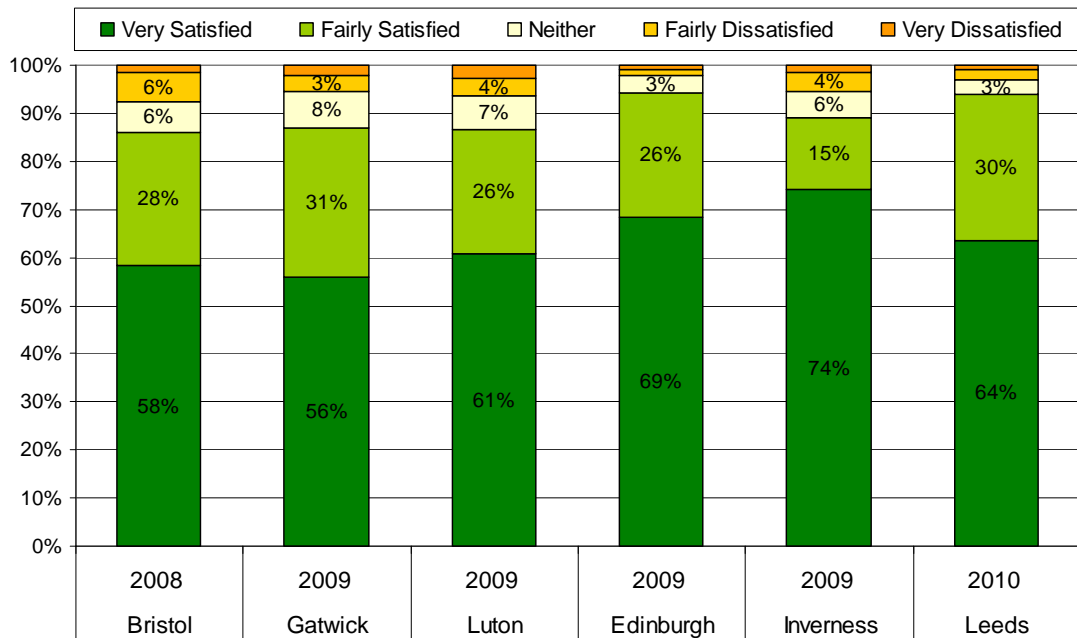
Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2008-2010 – DfT module. Weighted results.

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

3.5 The majority (61%) of respondents said there was no aspect of security screening with which they were least satisfied. This was the case for around three-quarters (76%) of respondents at Manchester, nearly two-thirds at Stansted (64%) and Leeds Bradford (63%) and over half (57%) at Heathrow.

3.6 The aspect of security screening with which passengers at Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester were least satisfied was queuing (cited by 11% at Heathrow and Stansted and 4% at Manchester) followed by removal of shoes and restriction of liquids.

3.7 At Leeds Bradford, respondents said the least satisfactory aspect was the restriction of liquids (cited by 9% of respondents) followed by queuing and then removal of shoes.

3.8 Other issues raised by passengers included the slow speed of screening process (cited by 5% of passengers at Heathrow) and staff attitude/politeness (cited by 5% at Leeds Bradford).
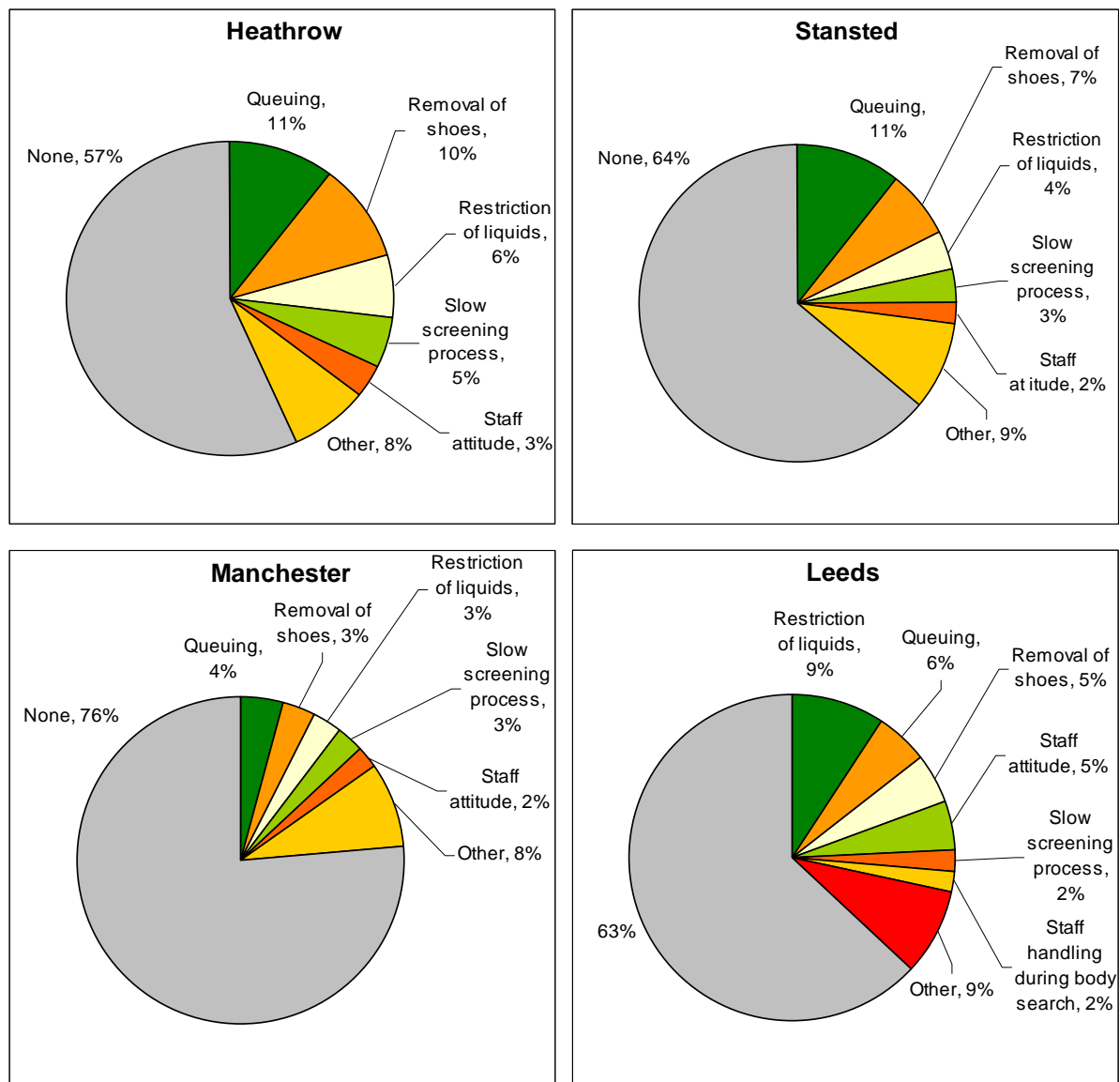
Table 2: Least satisfactory aspects of security screening, 2010[1]

	Heathrow	Stansted	Manchester	Leeds Bradford
Queuing	11%	11%	4%	6%
Removal of shoes	10%	7%	3%	5%
Restriction of liquids	6%	4%	3%	9%
Slow speed of screening process	5%	3%	3%	2%
Staff attitude/ politeness	3%	2%	2%	5%
Intrusive checking of bag	1%	1%	1%	1%
Staff handling during body search	1%	1%	1%	2%
Staff handling during bag search	1%	1%	0.2%	0.5%
Thoroughness of Security	1%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%
Removal of belt/jacket	1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Information	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Removal of laptop	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Lack of space at security	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Unprepared Passengers	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff Awareness	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Intrusion of Privacy	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
General Organisation	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Lack of Seating	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Help with young children	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Purchase of Liquids bag	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.1%
Other	2%	5%	5%	7%
None	57%	64%	76%	63%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Unweighted sample size	*6,100*	*4,762*	*4,116*	*1,053*

Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2010 – DfT module. Weighted results.

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[1] This question was asked for the first time in 2010

Figure 2: Least satisfactory aspects of security screening, 2010

Heathrow

- Queuing, 11%
- Removal of shoes, 10%
- Restriction of liquids, 6%
- Slow screening process, 5%
- Staff attitude, 3%
- Other, 8%
- None, 57%

Stansted

- Removal of shoes, 7%
- Queuing, 11%
- Restriction of liquids, 4%
- Slow screening process, 3%
- Staff attitude, 2%
- Other, 9%
- None, 64%

Manchester

- Restriction of liquids, 3%
- Removal of shoes, 3%
- Queuing, 4%
- Slow screening process, 3%
- Staff attitude, 2%
- Other, 8%
- None, 76%

Leeds

- Restriction of liquids, 9%
- Queuing, 6%
- Removal of shoes, 5%
- Staff attitude, 5%
- Slow screening process, 2%
- Staff handling during body search, 2%
- Other, 9%
- 63%

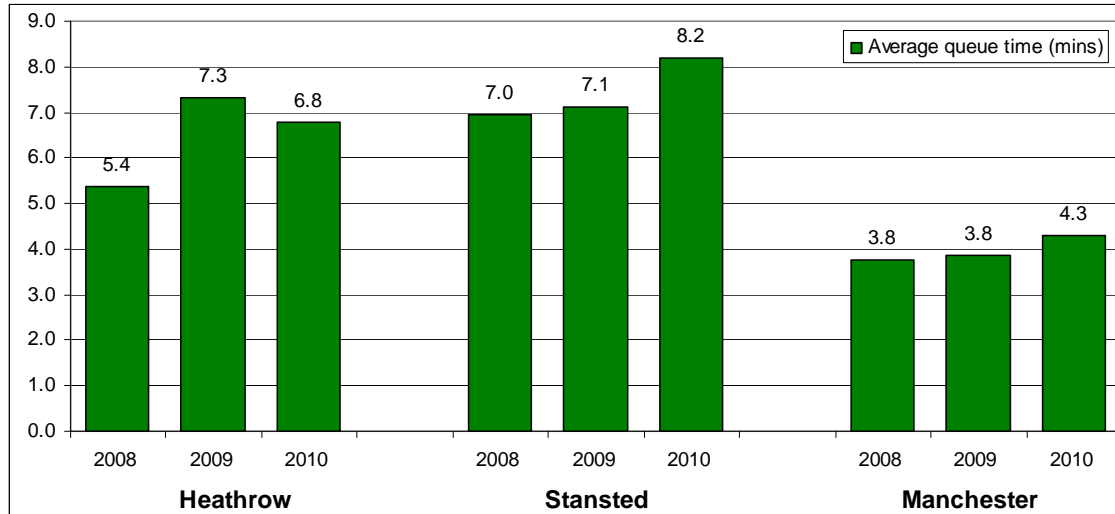Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2010 – DfT module. Weighted results.

3.9 People travelling for business or on scheduled flights were more likely to mention queuing as the aspect they were least satisfied with compared to people travelling for leisure and on charter flights respectively.

3.10 At Heathrow, passengers at Terminal 4 were less likely to cite queuing and more likely to say there was no aspect with which they were least satisfied than passengers at the other Heathrow terminals.

For how long, in minutes, did you queue when waiting to be security screened?

3.11 On average, passengers at Stansted said they queued for the longest amount of time (8.2 minutes) followed by Heathrow (6.8 minutes) while passengers at Manchester and Leeds Bradford said they queued for an average of 4.3 minutes.

Figure 3a: Perceived average queuing time at security screening based on passenger estimates: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2010

Figure 3b: Perceived average queuing time at security screening based on passenger estimates: other airports surveyed in 2008, 2009 or 2010
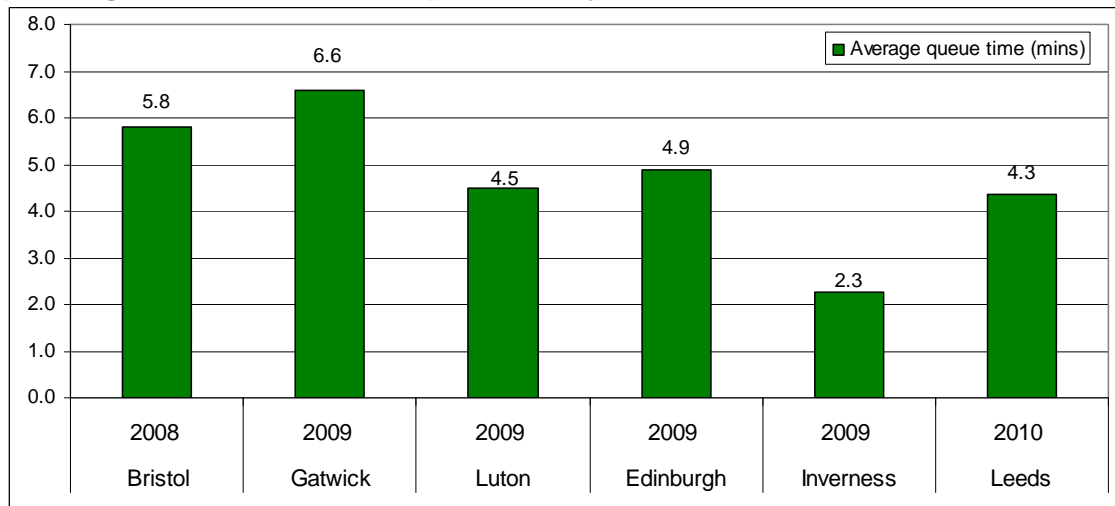
Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2008-2010 – DfT module. Weighted results.

3.12 It is worth noting that passengers tend to over-estimate their queuing time so these figures are likely to be higher than actual queue times at these airports. They should nonetheless given an indication of relative queuing times between airports and the extent to which these have changed at the three airports surveyed each year.

3.13 This appears to be supported by figures for Heathrow and Stansted, published by BAA as part of the Service Quality Rebate scheme, which show the proportion of passengers at these airports who queued at security screening for 10 minutes or

Table 3: Perceived queuing time at security screening based on passenger estimates, 2008-2010

	Survey year	0 minutes	1-5 minutes	6-10 minutes	Over 10 minutes	Unweighted sample size
Heathrow[1]	2008	14%	58%	19%	8%	*4,886*
Heathrow	2009	10%	48%	26%	16%	*6,201*
Heathrow	2010	10%	50%	27%	13%	*6,139*
Stansted	2008	10%	52%	25%	14%	*4,051*
Stansted	2009	8%	53%	25%	15%	*4,457*
Stansted	2010	7%	46%	27%	20%	*4,790*
Manchester	2008	27%	59%	10%	5%	*3,811*
Manchester	2009	28%	57%	10%	5%	*4,662*
Manchester	2010	30%	51%	12%	7%	*4,265*
Bristol	2008	22%	48%	19%	11%	*1,799*
Gatwick	2009	17%	50%	20%	14%	*5,226*
Luton	2009	18%	62%	13%	6%	*1,345*
Edinburgh	2009	14%	63%	18%	5%	*2,678*
Inverness	2009	56%	36%	5%	3%	*509*
Leeds Bradford	2010	33%	45%	14%	8%	*1,060*

Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2008 to 2010 – DfT module. Weighted results.

3.14 Around a third of passengers at Manchester and Leeds Bradford said they did not have to queue at all for security screening compared to 10% at Heathrow and 7% at Stansted. Around half of passengers queued for 1-5 minutes.
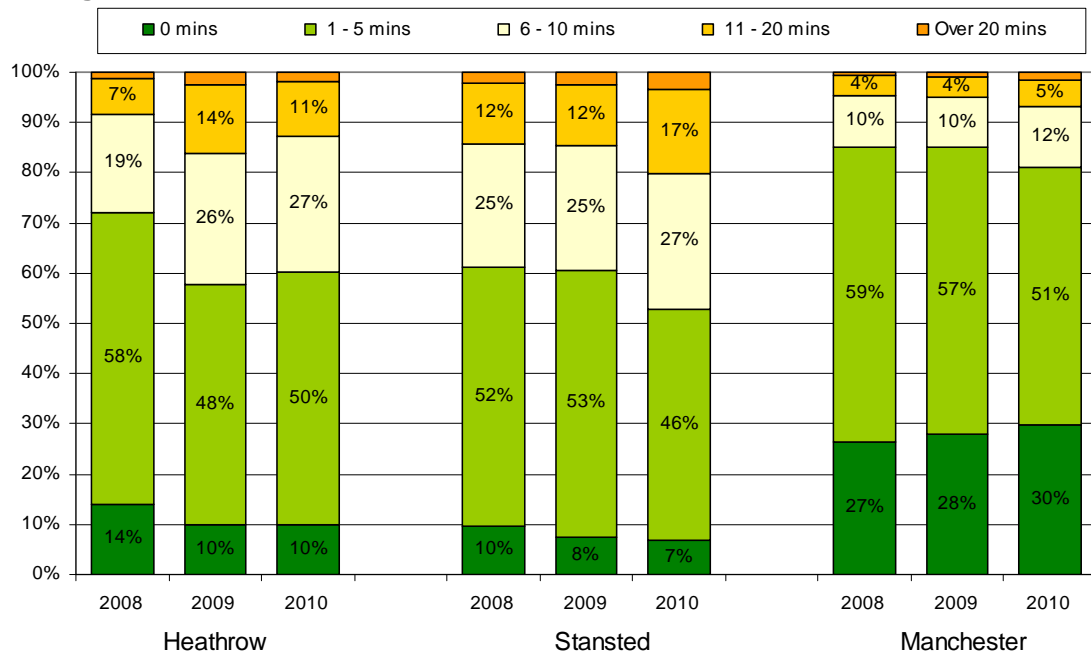
3.15 The proportion who said they queued for over 10 minutes on average ranged from 7% at Manchester to 20% at Stansted while the proportion saying they queued for over 20 minutes ranged from 1% at Leeds Bradford to 3% at Stansted.

3.16 In 2010 the average time spent queuing at security screening fell slightly at Heathrow compared to 2009 but increased at Stansted and Manchester.
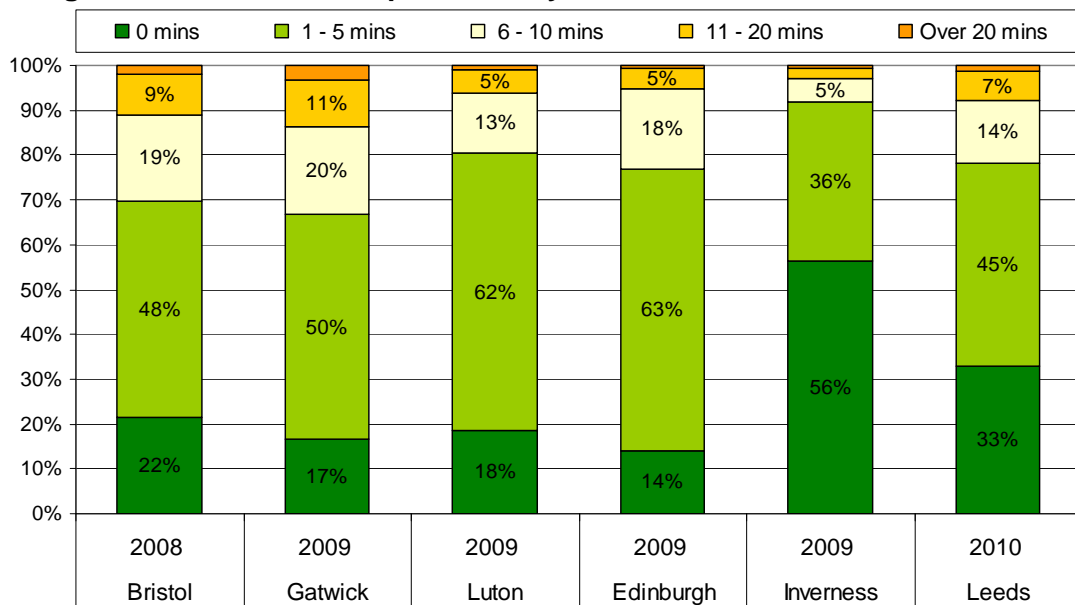
3.17 The proportion of passengers with no queuing time was more than twice as high among passengers on charter flights (29%) compared to those on scheduled flights (12%).

Figure 4a: Perceived security screening queue time (banded) based on passenger estimates: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2010

Legend: ■ 0 mins ■ 1 - 5 mins □ 6 - 10 mins ■ 11 - 20 mins ■ Over 20 mins

Heathrow — 2008: 14%, 58%, 19%, 7%; 2009: 10%, 48%, 26%, 14%; 2010: 10%, 50%, 27%, 11%
Stansted — 2008: 10%, 52%, 25%, 12%; 2009: 8%, 53%, 25%, 12%; 2010: 7%, 46%, 27%, 17%
Manchester — 2008: 27%, 59%, 10%, 4%; 2009: 28%, 57%, 10%, 4%; 2010: 30%, 51%, 12%, 5%

Figure 4b: Perceived security screening queue time (banded) based on passenger estimates: other airports surveyed in 2008, 2009 or 2010

Legend: ■ 0 mins ■ 1 - 5 mins □ 6 - 10 mins ■ 11 - 20 mins ■ Over 20 mins

Bristol 2008: 22%, 48%, 19%, 9%
Gatwick 2009: 17%, 50%, 20%, 11%
Luton 2009: 18%, 62%, 13%, 5%
Edinburgh 2009: 14%, 63%, 18%, 5%
Inverness 2009: 56%, 36%, 5%
Leeds 2010: 33%, 45%, 14%, 7%

Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2008-2010 – DfT module. Weighted results.

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

3.18 Overall, a large majority (89%) of passengers strongly agreed or agreed that any inconvenience caused by security screening was acceptable, ranging from 88% at Stansted to 94% at Leeds Bradford.

3.19 The proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement was slightly higher among passengers travelling for leisure than on business (90% and 87% respectively) and among passengers on charter than scheduled flights (92% compared with 89%).

Table 4: Agreement with acceptability of any inconvenience caused by security screening

|	Survey year	Strongly agree or agree	Neither	Strongly disagree or disagree	Unweighted sample size
Heathrow	2008	87%	7%	6%	*5,037*
Heathrow	2009	88%	7%	5%	*6,189*
Heathrow	2010	90%	7%	4%	*6,127*
Stansted	2008	89%	6%	5%	*3,767*
Stansted	2009	88%	7%	5%	*4,142*
Stansted	2010	88%	7%	5%	*4,718*
Manchester	2008	93%	4%	3%	*3,247*
Manchester	2009	94%	3%	3%	*3,149*
Manchester	2010	89%	6%	5%	*4,167*
Bristol	2008	89%	5%	6%	*1,801*
Gatwick	2009	89%	6%	5%	*5,136*
Luton	2009	88%	6%	6%	*1,347*
Edinburgh	2009	95%	3%	2%	*2,671*
Inverness	2009	93%	4%	4%	*507*
Leeds Bradford	2010	94%	4%	3%	*1,055*

Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2008-2010 – DfT module. Weighted results.

Figure 5a: Agreement with acceptability of any inconvenience caused by security screening: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2010
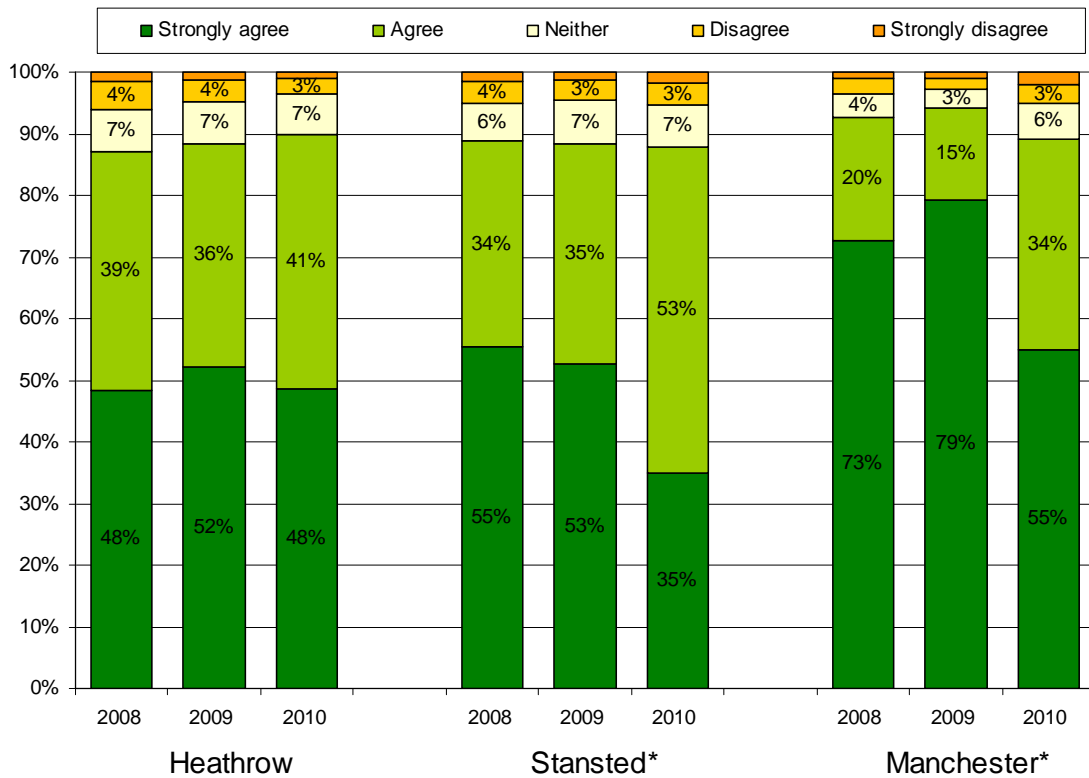
* There is a discontinuity in the series between 2008/2009 and 2010. Prior to 2010 the interviewers did not ask all respondents this question, particularly at Stansted and Manchester. This is likely to explain the step change in the proportions who 'agree' and 'strongly agree' at these airports in 2010.

Figure 5b: Agreement with acceptability of any inconvenience caused by security screening: other airports surveyed in 2008, 2009 or 2010

Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2008-2010 – DfT module. Weighted results.

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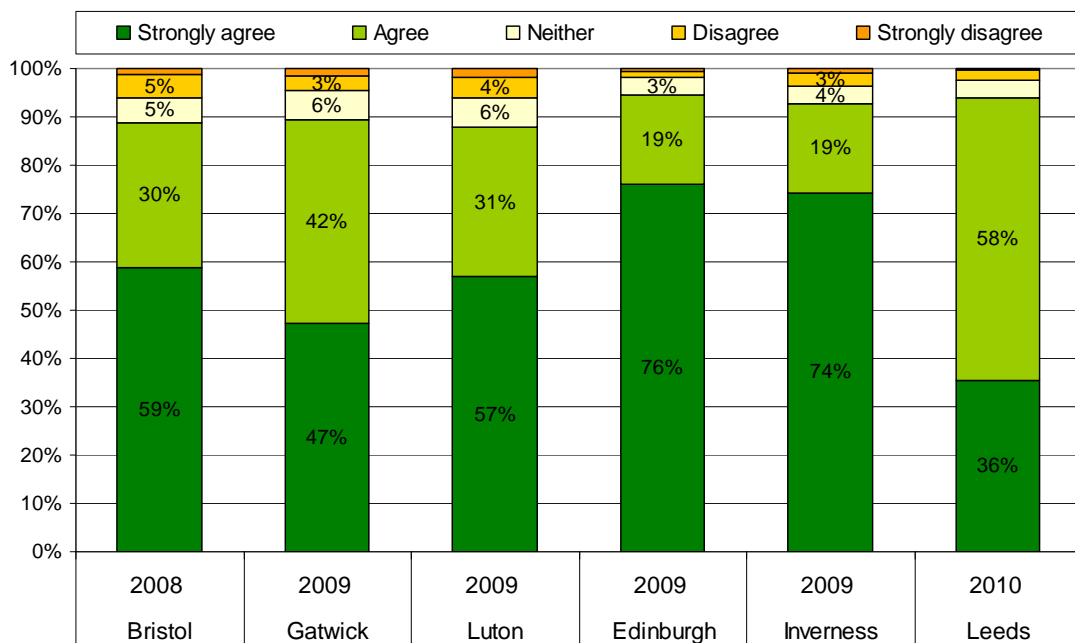
CAA survey module on security screening for 2010

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

Characteristics of passengers at the surveyed airports

In 2010, the four airports surveyed accounted for 105 million terminal passengers, 50% of the 211 million passengers at UK airports in 2010.

Heathrow is the largest UK airport, with 65.7 million passengers in 2010. Stansted and Manchester handled the third and fourth highest number of passengers in 2010 (after Gatwick), at 18.6 million and 17.7 million respectively. Leeds Bradford is much smaller, handling just 2.7 million passengers in 2010.
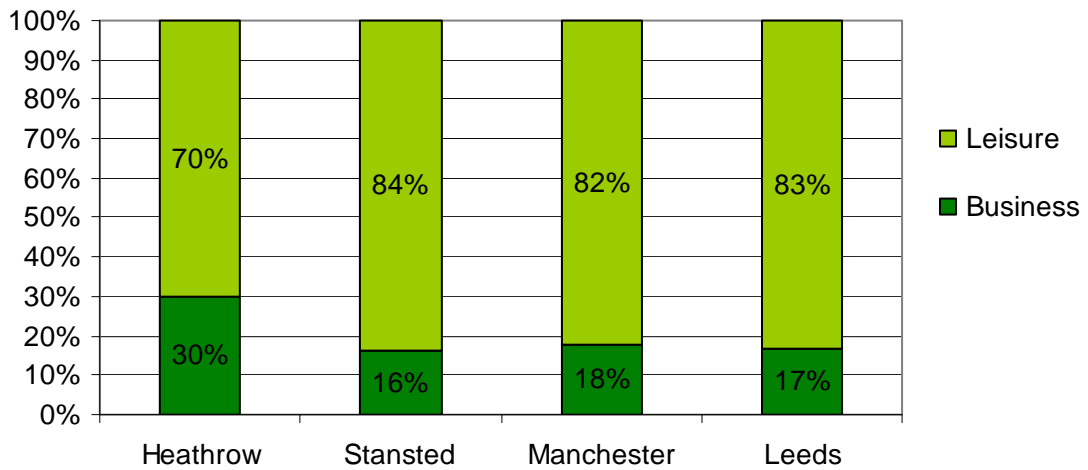
Figure B1: Total terminal passengers, 2010
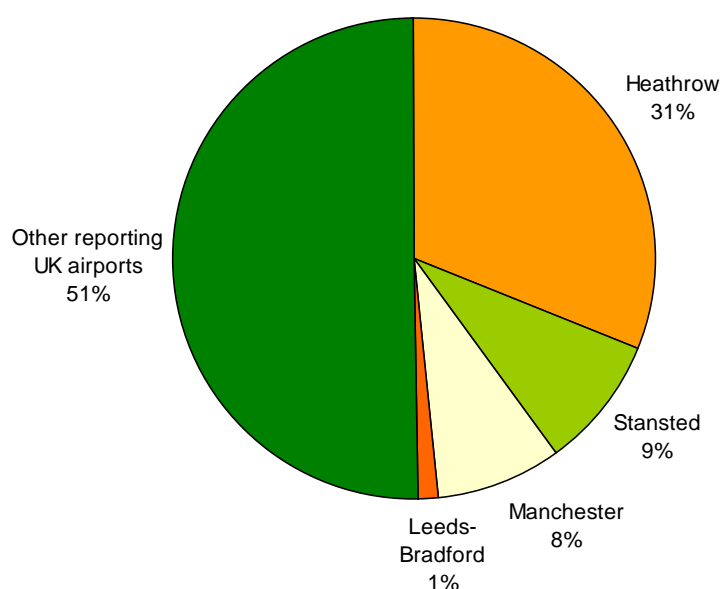
Source: CAA Airport Statistics 2010

The four airports surveyed differ not only in terms of size but also in terms of the type of passengers that use them (see Figures B2-4 and Table C1). For example:

- In 2010, **Heathrow** had a much higher proportion of long-haul passengers than other airports at 53%. Heathrow also had a relatively high proportion of passengers who were foreign residents (58%) and travelling on business (30%).

- **Stansted** had a high proportion of passengers on short-haul flights (90%). The age profile of passengers using Stansted is relatively young, with nearly half (47%) of adult passengers aged between 16 and 34 years.

- **Manchester** was the only airport in the sample with a substantial proportion of charter flights; 30% of passengers at Manchester travelled on chartered flights in 2010. After Heathrow, this airport had the highest proportion of long-haul passengers in the sample (26%).

- **Leeds Bradford** is a small, local airport where the large majority of passengers are UK residents (86%) and are on short-haul flights (83%).

Figure B2: Terminal passengers by airport and purpose
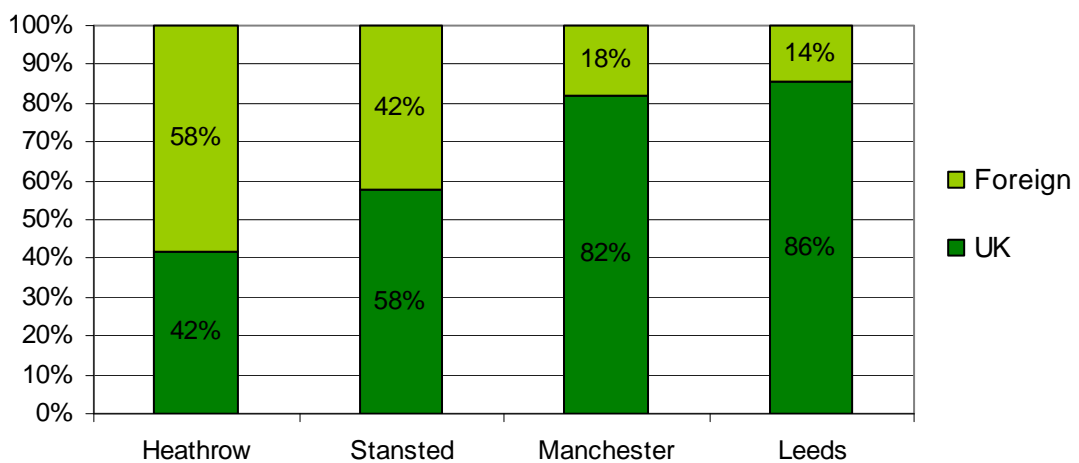

Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2010

Figure B3: Terminal passengers by airport and destination
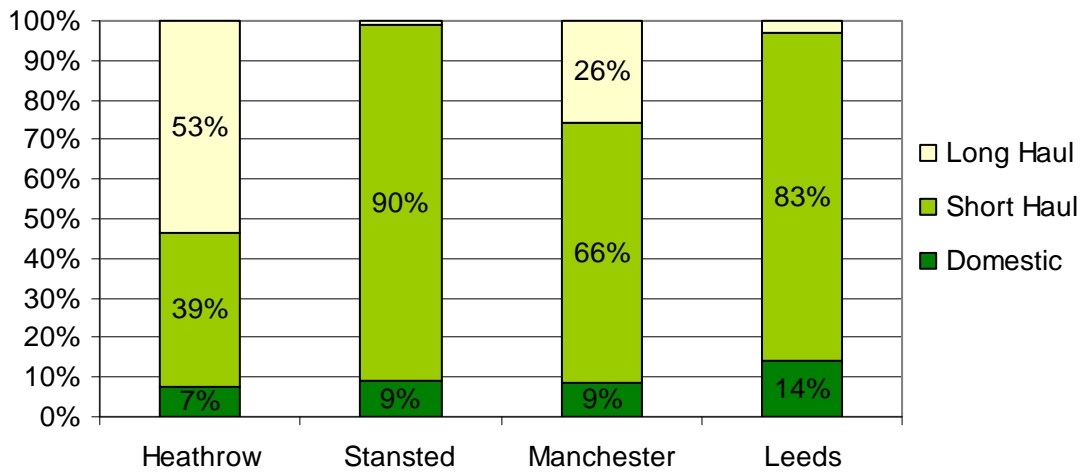
Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2010

Figure B4: Terminal passengers by airport and country of residence

Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2010