

Air passenger experience of security screening: Annual Report

Statistical Release



Department
for Transport

Air passenger experience of security screening: 2012

In 2012, nearly 24,000 passengers at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and Manchester airports were asked about their experience of security screening. The survey questions covered:

- satisfaction with security screening
- the least satisfactory aspect
- estimated queuing time
- acceptability of any inconvenience caused.

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 to 2011. Detailed results for earlier years are available on the Department's website.

Key Findings	1
Satisfaction with screening	2
Least satisfactory aspects	4
Security queue time	6
Acceptability of inconvenience caused by security screening	9
Annex A: Survey questions	11
Annex B: Passenger characteristics at survey airports	12
Background notes	14

Key findings include:

- Over 90% of air passengers surveyed in 2012 said they were very or fairly satisfied with their experiences at security screening and 3% were very or fairly dissatisfied.
- The aspects of security screening with which passengers were least satisfied were:
 - queuing (cited by 6%)
 - slow speed of processing (5%).
 - removal of shoes (4%)
 - restriction of liquids (4%)The majority of passengers (72%) said there was no aspect with which they were least satisfied.
- The average time passengers said they spent queuing for security screening ranged from 5.3 minutes at Gatwick to 8.4 minutes at Stansted.
- The majority of passengers (91%) agreed that any inconvenience caused by the security screening was acceptable.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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The set of questions asked in 2011 is given in **Annex A**. As responses may be influenced by the passenger profile at each airport, an overview of passenger characteristics at the five airports surveyed in 2011 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**.

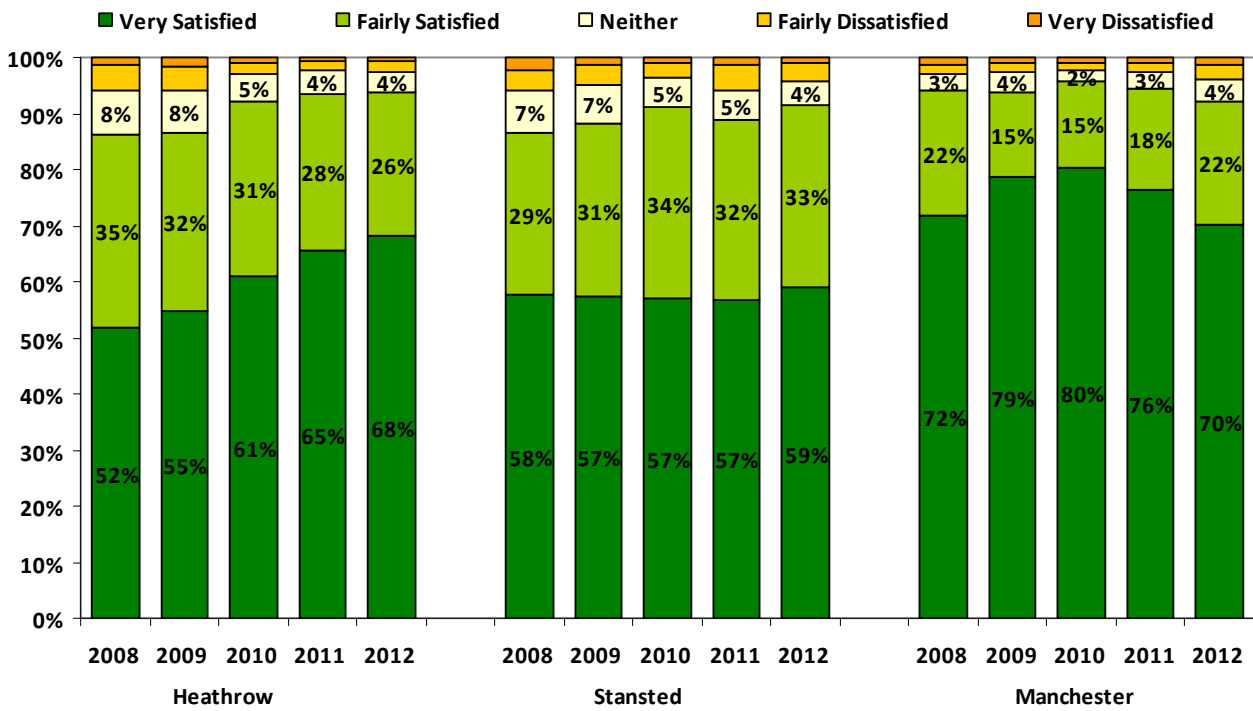
How satisfied are you with your experience of the security screening used at the airport today?

- A large majority (93%) of passengers surveyed in 2012 said they were very or fairly satisfied with their experience at security screening and over two thirds (68%) were very satisfied. At each of the five airports surveyed, at least 90% of respondents said they were very or fairly satisfied.
- Satisfaction at Heathrow has increased from 86% in 2008 to 94% in 2012, with the proportion saying they are very satisfied increasing from 52% to 68%. Improvement has been similar at Gatwick, with overall satisfaction increasing from 87% in 2009 to 94% in 2012, and the proportion who were very satisfied from 56% to 71%. Improvement at Stansted and Luton has been less pronounced. At Manchester levels of satisfaction peaked in 2010 but have fallen slightly in the last 2 years.
- Satisfaction was slightly higher among leisure than business passengers and among long-haul passengers compared to short haul and domestic.

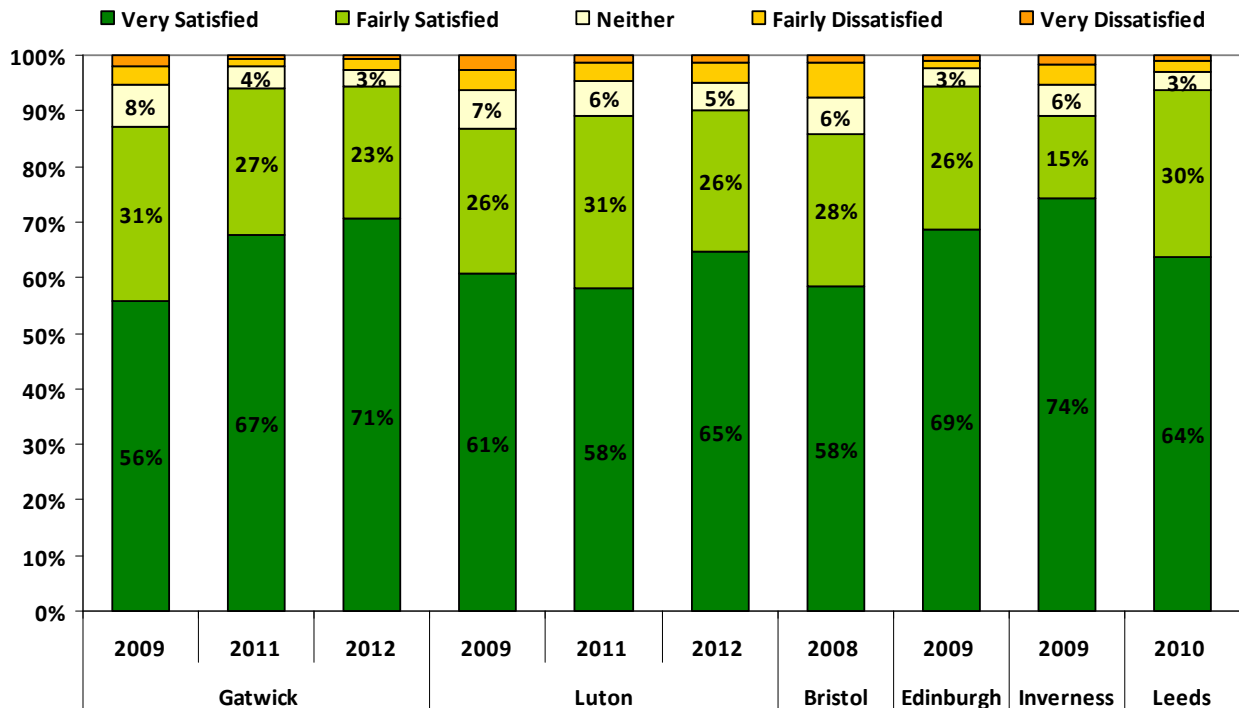
Satisfaction with security screening, 2008-2012

	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
Heathrow	2011	93%	4%	2%	5,453
Heathrow	2012	94%	4%	2%	6,712
Stansted	2008	87%	7%	6%	4,059
Stansted	2009	88%	7%	5%	4,458
Stansted	2010	91%	5%	4%	4,799
Stansted	2011	89%	5%	6%	4,311
Stansted	2012	91%	4%	4%	5,085
Manchester	2008	94%	3%	3%	3,854
Manchester	2009	94%	4%	3%	4,732
Manchester	2010	96%	2%	2%	4,270
Manchester	2011	95%	3%	3%	5,076
Manchester	2012	92%	4%	4%	5,567
Gatwick	2009	87%	8%	5%	5,212
Gatwick	2011	94%	4%	2%	4,361
Gatwick	2012	94%	3%	2%	5,108
Luton	2009	87%	7%	6%	1,345
Luton	2011	89%	6%	5%	1,392
Luton	2012	90%	5%	5%	1,462
Bristol	2008	86%	6%	8%	1,803
Edinburgh	2009	94%	3%	2%	2,688
Inverness	2009	89%	6%	5%	509
Leeds Bradford	2010	94%	3%	3%	1,059

Satisfaction with security screening: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2012



Satisfaction with security screening: other airports surveyed in 2008-2012



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

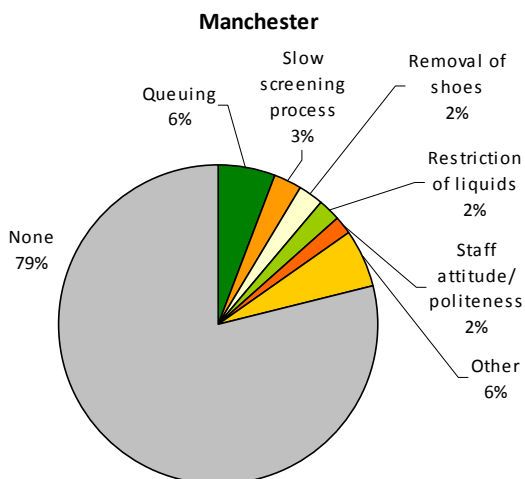
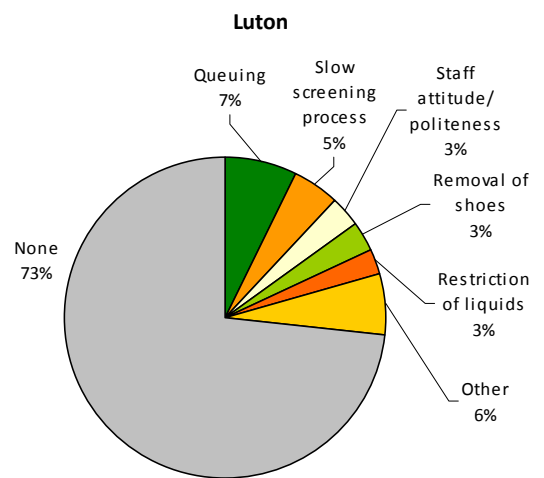
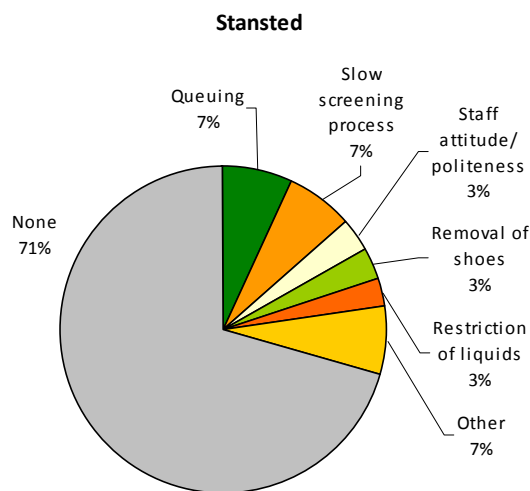
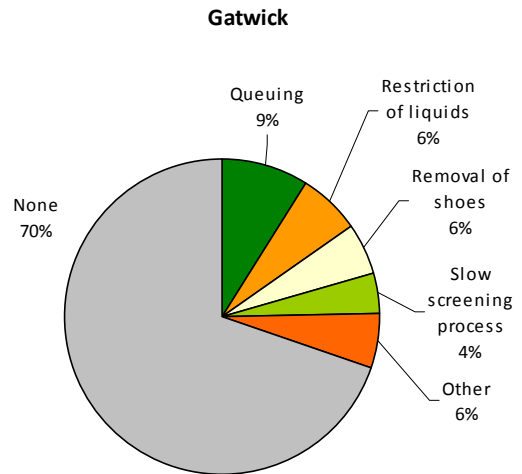
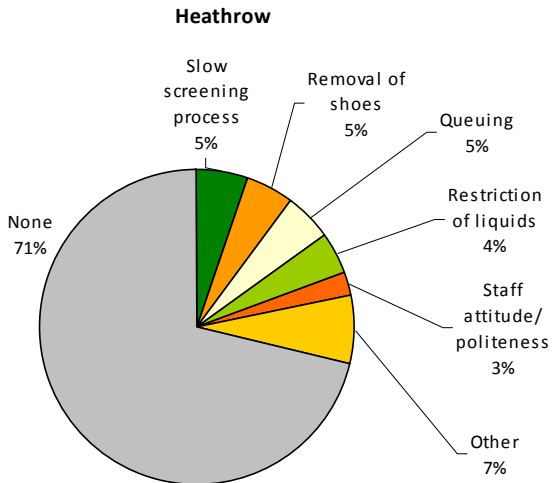
- The majority (72%) of respondents said there was no aspect of security screening with which they were least satisfied. This was the case for 79% of respondents at Manchester and between 70% and 73% at the other four airports surveyed.
- Overall the aspects of security screening with which passengers were least satisfied was queuing (cited by 6%) and slow speed of security processing (5%). Queuing was cited by 9% of respondents at Gatwick, 7% at Stansted and Luton, 6% at Manchester and 5% at Heathrow.
- Removal of shoes and restriction of liquids were both cited by 4% of all passengers surveyed, ranging from 2% at Manchester to 6% at Gatwick in both cases.
- The proportion of passengers saying there was no aspect with which they were least satisfied increased from 68% in 2011 to 72% in 2012. The increase was particularly marked at Stansted (62% to 71%). Conversely the proportion of respondents identifying particular problems decreased.

Least satisfactory aspects of security screening, 2012

	Heathrow	Gatwick	Stansted	Luton	Manchester
Queuing	5%	9%	7%	7%	6%
Slow speed of screening process	5%	4%	7%	5%	3%
Removal of shoes	5%	6%	3%	3%	2%
Restriction of liquids	4%	6%	3%	3%	2%
Staff attitude/ politeness	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%
Intrusive checking of bag	1%	1%	1%	1%	-
Staff handling during body search	1%	1%	1%	1%	-
Staff handling during bag search	1%	-	1%	1%	-
Thoroughness of Security	-	-	-	1%	1%
General Organisation	-	-	-	-	-
Removal of belt/jacket	-	-	-	-	-
Lack of space at security	-	-	-	-	-
Information	-	-	-	-	-
Intrusion of Privacy	-	-	0	-	-
Unprepared Passengers	-	-	-	-	-
Removal of laptop	-	-	-	0	-
Staff Awareness	-	0	0	0	-
Purchase of Liquids bag	-	0	-	1%	-
Lack of Seating	0	0	-	-	-
Help with young children	0	-	-	0	-
Other	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%
None	71%	70%	71%	73%	79%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Unweighted sample size	6,695	5,074	5,032	1,460	5,529

- negligible (less than 0.5%)

Least satisfactory aspects of security screening, 2012

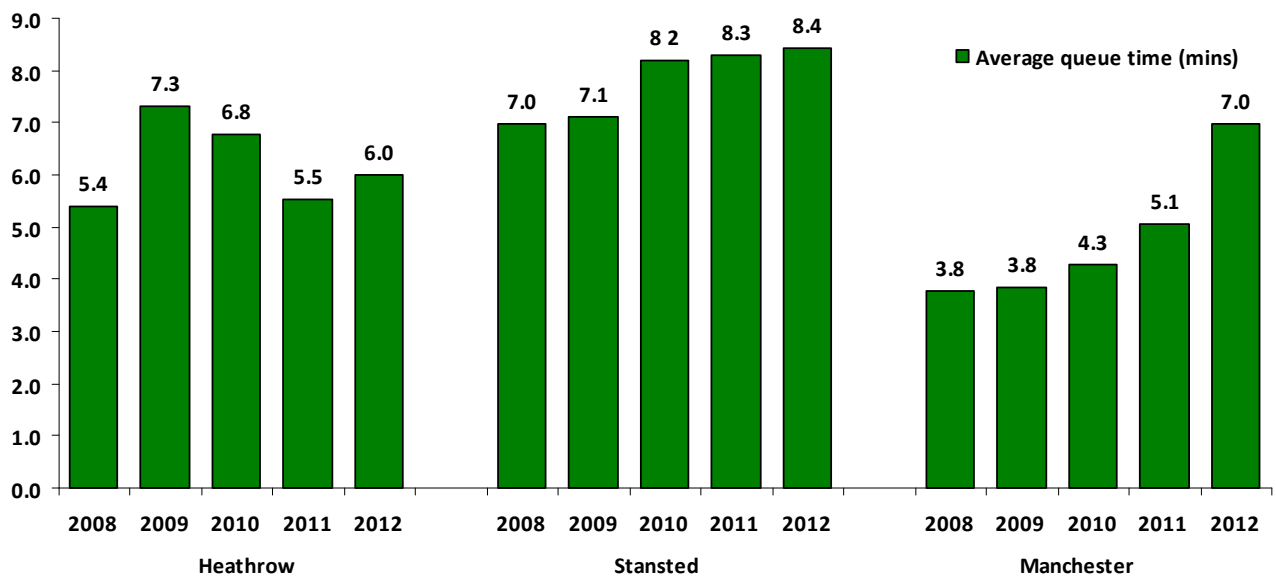


- The proportion of respondents citing queuing was slightly higher among passengers on domestic flights (9%) than on short haul (7%) or long-haul (5%) and was relatively high at Gatwick North (10%), where queue times were longer, on average, than at Gatwick South, which opened a new security area at the end of 2011.

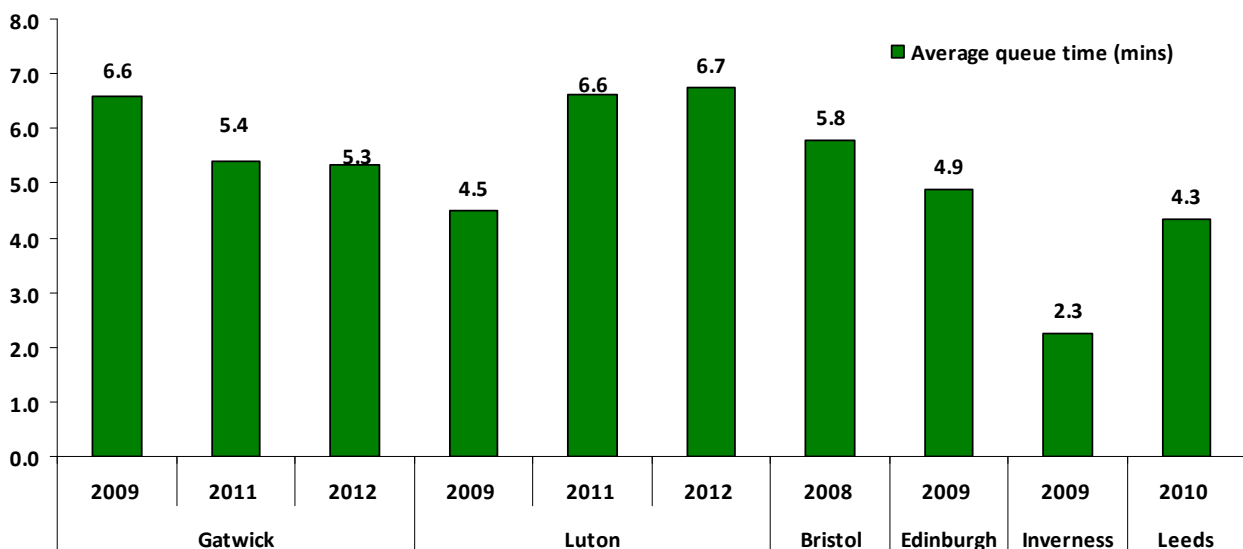
For how long, in minutes, did you queue when waiting to be security screened?

- The average queue time in 2012, based on passengers' estimates of how long they queued, ranged from 5.3 minutes at Gatwick to 8.4 minutes at Stansted. Average perceived queue time fell slightly at Gatwick in 2012 compared to 2011 but increased slightly at Heathrow, Stansted and Luton. Manchester experienced a marked increase, from 5.1 minutes in 2011 to 7.0 minutes in 2012.

Perceived average queuing time at security screening based on passenger estimates: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2012



Perceived average queuing time at security screening based on passenger estimates: other airports surveyed in 2008-2012



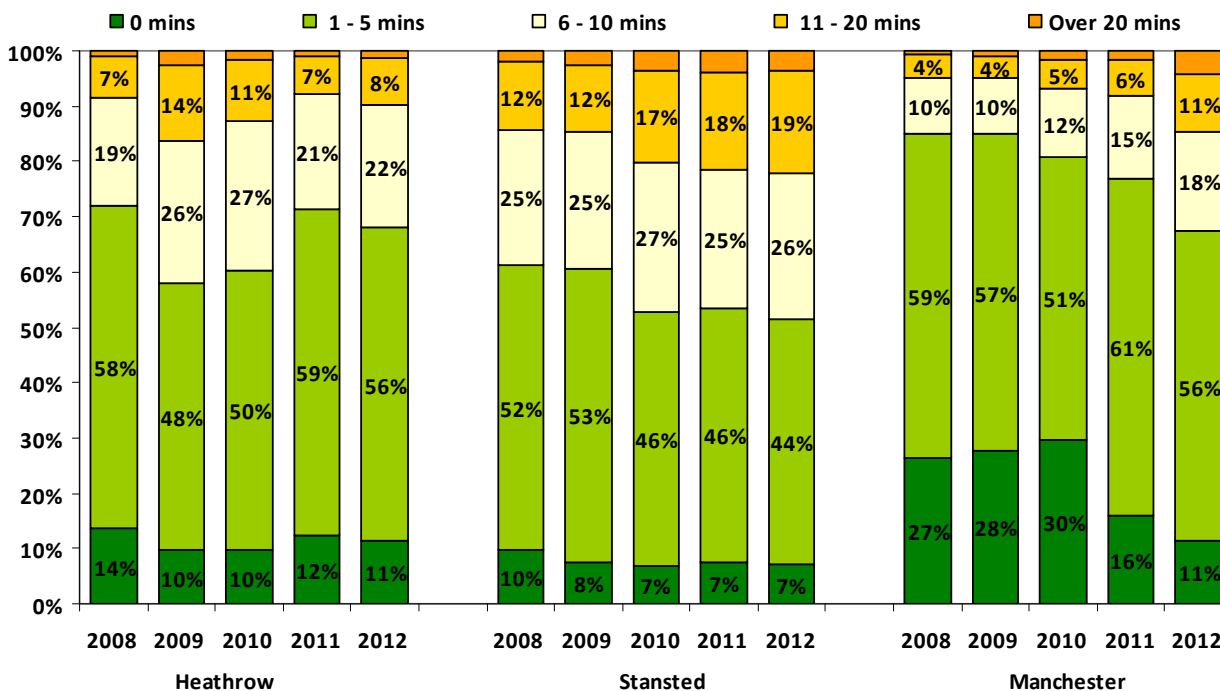
Perceived average queuing time at security screening based on passenger estimates, 2008-2012

	Survey year	0 minutes	1-5 minutes	6-10 minutes	Over 10 minutes	Unweighted sample size
Heathrow	2008	14%	58%	19%	8%	4,886
Heathrow	2009	10%	48%	26%	16%	6,201
Heathrow	2010	10%	50%	27%	13%	6,139
Heathrow	2011	12%	59%	21%	8%	5,447
Heathrow	2012	11%	56%	22%	10%	6,712
Stansted	2008	10%	52%	25%	14%	4,051
Stansted	2009	8%	53%	25%	15%	4,457
Stansted	2010	7%	46%	27%	20%	4,790
Stansted	2011	7%	46%	25%	21%	4,305
Stansted	2012	7%	44%	26%	22%	5,062
Manchester	2008	27%	59%	10%	5%	3,811
Manchester	2009	28%	57%	10%	5%	4,662
Manchester	2010	30%	51%	12%	7%	4,265
Manchester	2011	16%	61%	15%	8%	5,071
Manchester	2012	11%	56%	18%	15%	5,563
Gatwick	2009	17%	50%	20%	14%	5,226
Gatwick	2011	17%	56%	19%	9%	4,372
Gatwick	2012	18%	54%	20%	8%	5,114
Luton	2009	18%	62%	13%	6%	1,345
Luton	2011	15%	49%	22%	15%	1,390
Luton	2012	11%	53%	20%	15%	1,458
Bristol	2008	22%	48%	19%	11%	1,799
Edinburgh	2009	14%	63%	18%	5%	2,678
Inverness	2009	56%	36%	5%	3%	509
Leeds Bradford	2010	33%	45%	14%	8%	1,060

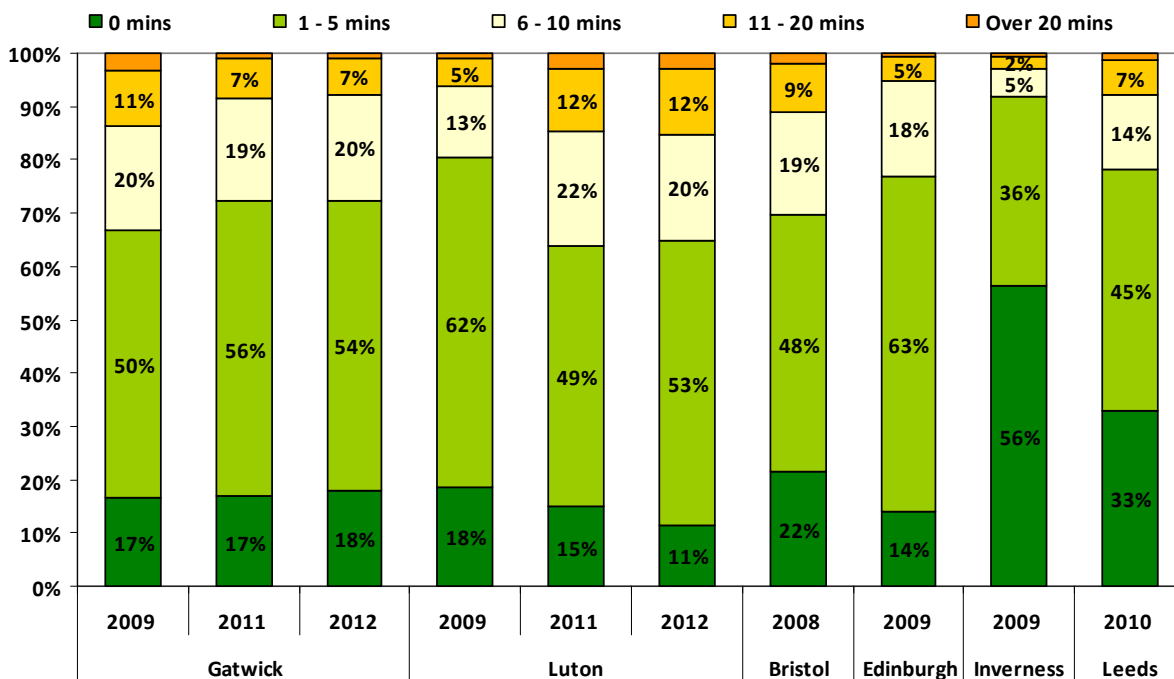
- 72% of passengers at Gatwick said they queued for 5 minutes or less compared to around two-thirds (65-68%) at Heathrow, Luton and Manchester and around half (52%) at Stansted.
- Conversely, the proportion who said they queued for over 10 minutes was lowest at Gatwick (8%) and Heathrow (10%) and highest at Stansted (22%).
- It is worth noting that passengers tend to overestimate their queuing time so these figures are likely to be higher than actual queuing times at these airports. They should nonetheless give some indication of relative queuing times between airports and the extent to which these have changed at the three airports surveyed each year.
- Estimates of actual queuing times are available for the three regulated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) as part of the Service Quality Rebate (SQR) scheme. Both sources suggest that

average queuing times have improved slightly at Gatwick between 2011 and 2012 and worsened at Heathrow, particularly in the latter part of the year. At Stansted, both sources show a marked increase in queue times between 2009 and 2010 followed by smaller annual fluctuations. At Manchester, the increase in queue time may be explained at least in part by the replacement of their cohort of body scanner machines with a smaller cohort following the end of an EU approved trial.

Perceived security screening queuing time (banded) based on passenger estimates: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2012



Perceived security screening queuing time (banded) based on passenger estimates at other airports surveyed in 2008-2012



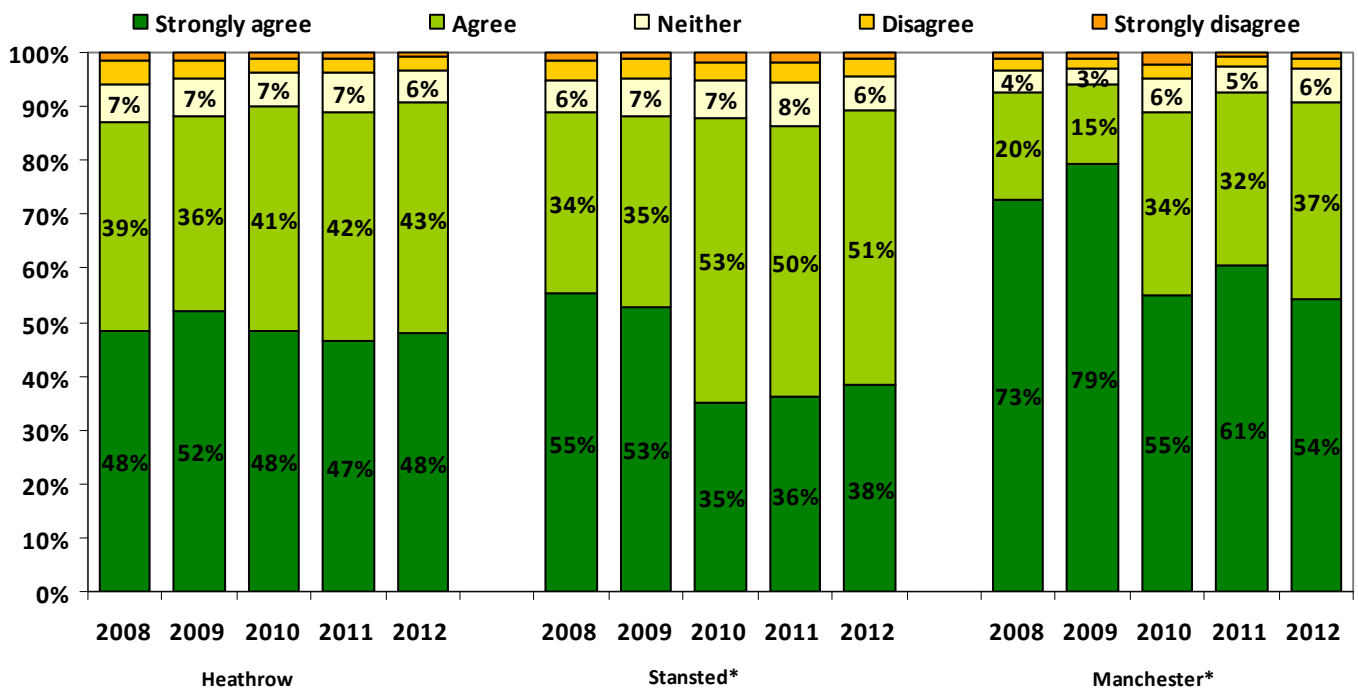
How strongly do you agree with the following statement: “Any inconvenience caused by the security screening was acceptable”?

- Overall, a large majority (91%) of passengers agreed or strongly agreed that any inconvenience caused by security screening was acceptable, ranging from 87% at Luton to 93% at Gatwick. Among all passengers surveyed, 3% disagreed with this statement.
- The proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement was slightly higher among passengers travelling for leisure than on business (92% and 88% respectively) and among those travelling long-haul than domestic (92% compared to 89%).
- There has been a slight increase in the proportion of passengers agreeing with this statement since this question was first asked at Heathrow (2008) and Gatwick (2009) but not at the other 3 airports surveyed in 2012.

Agreement with acceptability of any inconvenience caused by security screening, 2008-2012

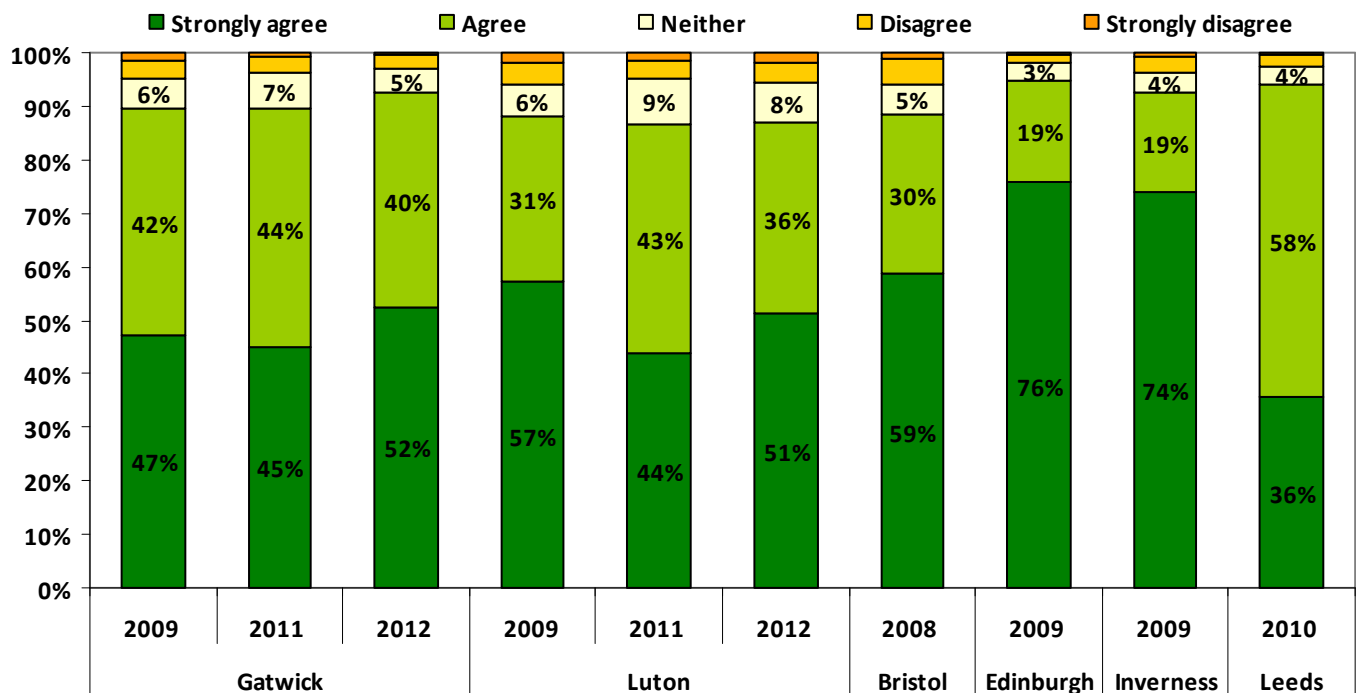
	Survey year	Strongly agree or agree	Neither	Strongly disagree or disagree	Unweighted sample size
Heathrow	2008	87%	7%	6%	5,037
Heathrow	2009	88%	7%	5%	6,189
Heathrow	2010	90%	7%	4%	6,127
Heathrow	2011	89%	7%	4%	5,415
Heathrow	2012	91%	6%	3%	6,659
Stansted	2008	89%	6%	5%	3,767
Stansted	2009	88%	7%	5%	4,142
Stansted	2010	88%	7%	5%	4,718
Stansted	2011	87%	8%	6%	4,255
Stansted	2012	89%	6%	4%	5,008
Manchester	2008	93%	4%	3%	3,247
Manchester	2009	94%	3%	3%	3,149
Manchester	2010	89%	6%	5%	4,167
Manchester	2011	93%	5%	3%	4,962
Manchester	2012	91%	6%	3%	5,493
Gatwick	2009	89%	6%	5%	5,136
Gatwick	2011	90%	7%	4%	4,299
Gatwick	2012	93%	5%	3%	4,963
Luton	2009	88%	6%	6%	1,347
Luton	2011	87%	9%	5%	1,381
Luton	2012	87%	8%	5%	1,461
Bristol	2008	89%	5%	6%	1,801
Edinburgh	2009	95%	3%	2%	2,671
Inverness	2009	93%	4%	4%	507
Leeds Bradford	2010	94%	4%	3%	1,055

Agreement with acceptability of any inconvenience caused by security screening: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2012



* 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.

Agreement with acceptability of any inconvenience caused by security screening: other airports surveyed in 2008-2012



ANNEX A

CAA survey module on security screening for 2012

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]

.....

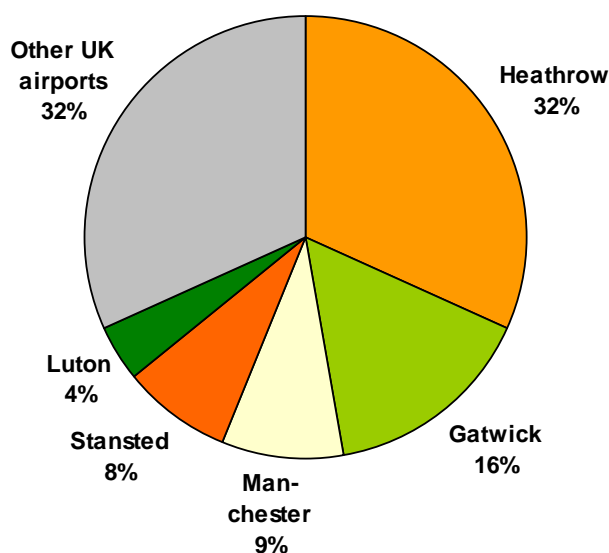
End of questionnaire

ANNEX B

Characteristics of passengers at the surveyed airports

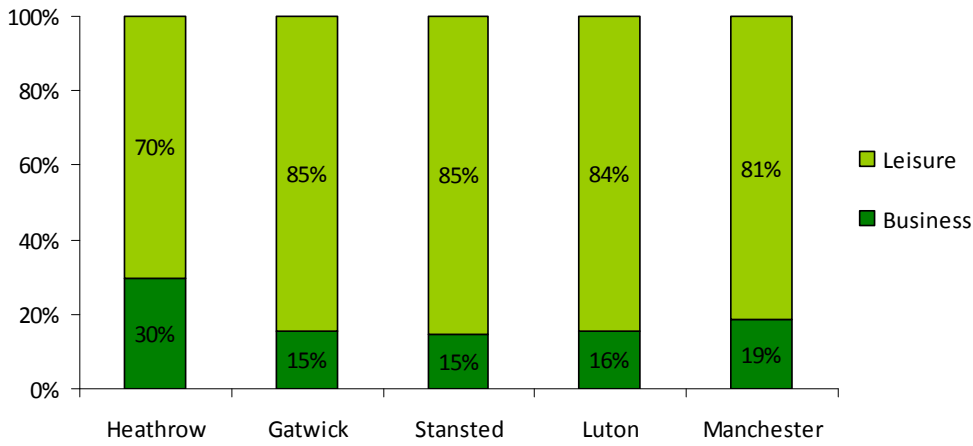
- In 2012, the five airports surveyed were the five largest UK airports in terms of the number of terminal passengers. They accounted for over 150 million terminal passengers, over two thirds (68%) of the 221 million passengers at all UK airports.
- Heathrow was the largest UK airport, accounting for nearly a third (32%) of all terminal passengers, followed by Gatwick (16%). Manchester and Stansted accounted for a similar proportion (8-9%) while Luton accounted for roughly half this amount (4%).

Total terminal passengers, 2012

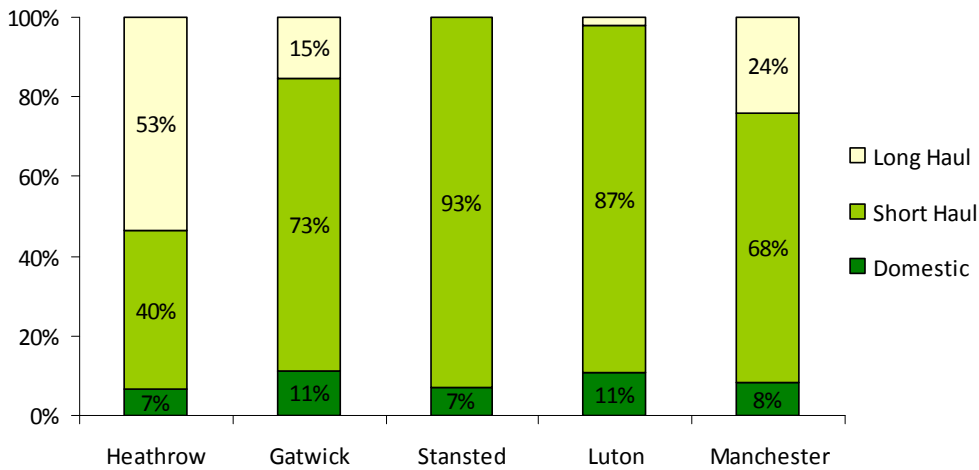


- The five airports surveyed differ not only in terms of size but also in terms of the type of passengers that use them (see Figures B2-4 and Table C1). For example:
 - In 2012, **Heathrow** had a much higher proportion of long-haul passengers than the other airports at 53%. Heathrow also had the highest proportion of passengers who were foreign residents (59%) and travelling on business (30%).
 - **Gatwick** had some long-haul flights, accounting for 15% of their passengers, and a higher proportion of passengers on charter flights than the other London airports (14%).
 - **Manchester** had the highest proportion of passengers on charter flights (23%) and, after Heathrow, this airport had the highest proportion of long-haul passengers in the sample (24%).
 - **Stansted** had a high proportion of passengers on short-haul flights (93%) and a relatively high proportion of foreign residents (43%). The age profile of passengers using Stansted is relatively young, with nearly half (47%) of adult passengers aged between 16 and 34 years.
 - **Luton** had a relatively high proportion of passengers on short-haul flights (87%). It mainly handled UK residents (70%), passengers travelling for leisure (84%) and passengers on scheduled flights (96%).

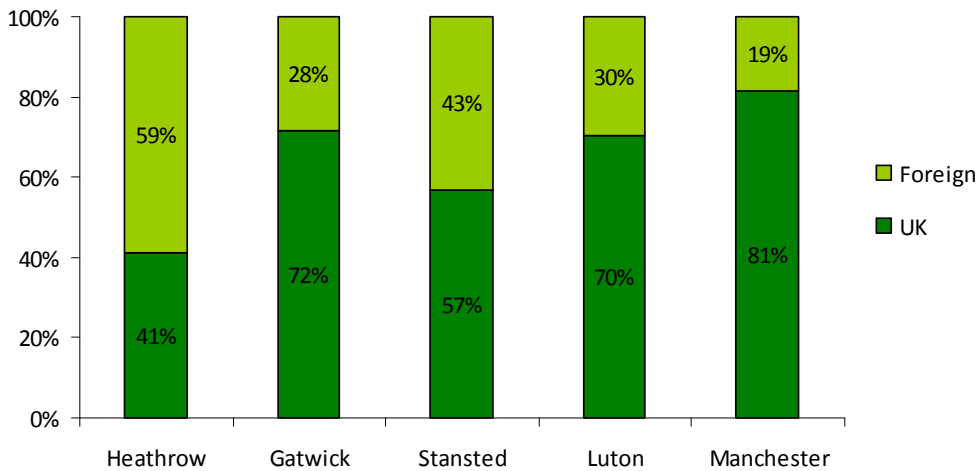
Terminal passengers by airport and purpose, 2012



Terminal passengers by airport and destination, 2012



Terminal passengers by airport and country of residence, 2012



Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2012

Background notes

Survey details

1. 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.
2. 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
3. In 2011, 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, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and Manchester. The same set of questions was asked at Heathrow, Stansted, Manchester and Leeds Bradford in 2010. 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 2011 and 2012.
4. 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.
5. In 2008 passengers using Heathrow Terminal 4 were not asked the questions on security screening as interviews were conducted prior to screening. In 2010 to 2012 Heathrow Terminal 2 was not in operation.

Analysis

1. The responses have been weighted to reflect the actual distribution of passengers by airport terminal and flight destination (domestic, short-haul and long-haul).
2. Passengers who did not answer a particular question (either because they refused or said they didn't know) have been excluded from the analysis of that question.
3. 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 airports surveyed in multiple years. However, due to the different subset of airports included 2008 to 2010, it is not possible to compare the overall results for these survey years with 2011 and 2012.
4. Differences between airports, in terms of 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 2012 is given in Annex B.
5. 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.

Quality

6. These official statistics are not designated National Statistics. However, they are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews and are produced free from any political interference.
7. 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](#).