



Air passenger experience of security screening: 2013

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Main findings

- 93% of air passengers surveyed in 2013 said they were very or fairly satisfied with their experiences at security screening with 68% saying they were very satisfied. Only 3% said 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 (3%)

The majority of passengers (74%) said there was no aspect with which they were least satisfied.

- The average time passengers said they spent queuing for security screening was 6.8 minutes, ranging from 3.3 minutes at Glasgow to 9.0 minutes at Stansted.
- The majority of passengers (91%) agreed that any inconvenience caused by the security screening was acceptable.
- At the five airports (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, Manchester), which were surveyed in 2011 to 2013, overall satisfaction was 93% in each of these years, with a slight increase in satisfaction at Gatwick and Stansted balanced out by a slight fall at Manchester and Luton.
- Average queuing time, as estimated by passengers, has fallen slightly at Gatwick since 2011 but increased at the other four airports.

93% of passengers surveyed said they were very or fairly satisfied with their experience of security screening.

Queuing and slow speed of processing were the aspects of security screening with which passengers were least satisfied.

About these statistics

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 Passenger Survey in 2013.

Over 27,000 passengers were asked about their experience of security screening at seven airports: Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The results are presented here, together with results from similar surveys in 2008 to 2012. Detailed results for earlier years are available on the Department's website. As a different subset of airports has been surveyed each year, it is not possible to compare the overall results between surveys but results for the 5 airports surveyed in 2009 and 2011-2013 can be combined and compared over time.

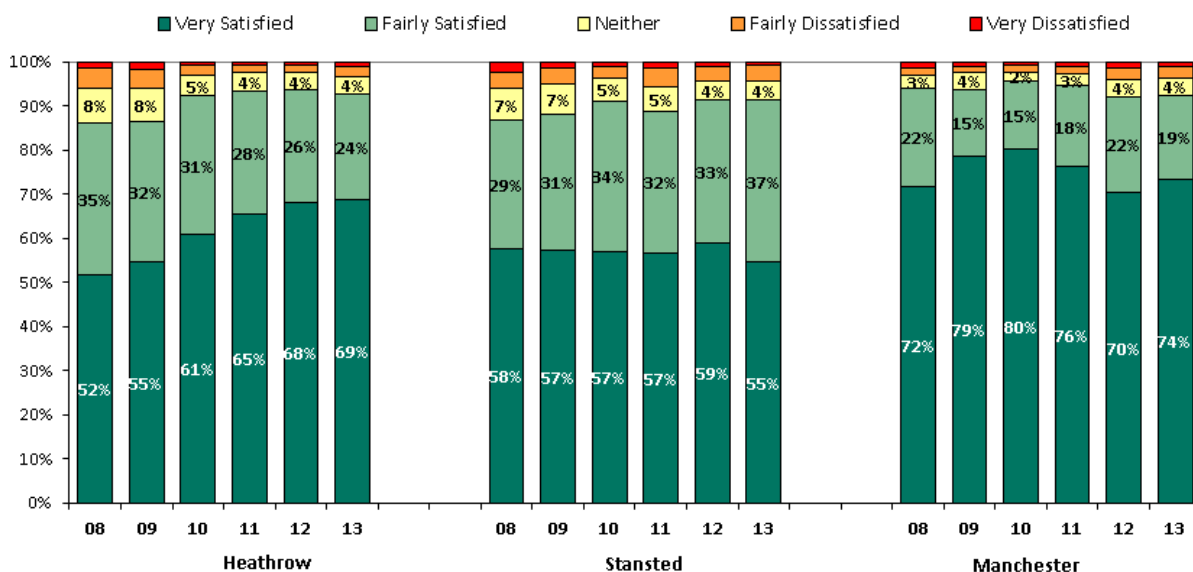
CONTENTS

- [Satisfaction with screening - p2](#)
- [Least satisfactory aspects – p3](#)
- [Security queue time – p4](#)
- [Acceptability of inconvenience caused – p7](#)
- [Background information – p8](#)
- [Annex A: Survey questions – p10](#)
- [Annex B: Passenger characteristics – p11](#)
- [Annex C: Detailed tables](#)

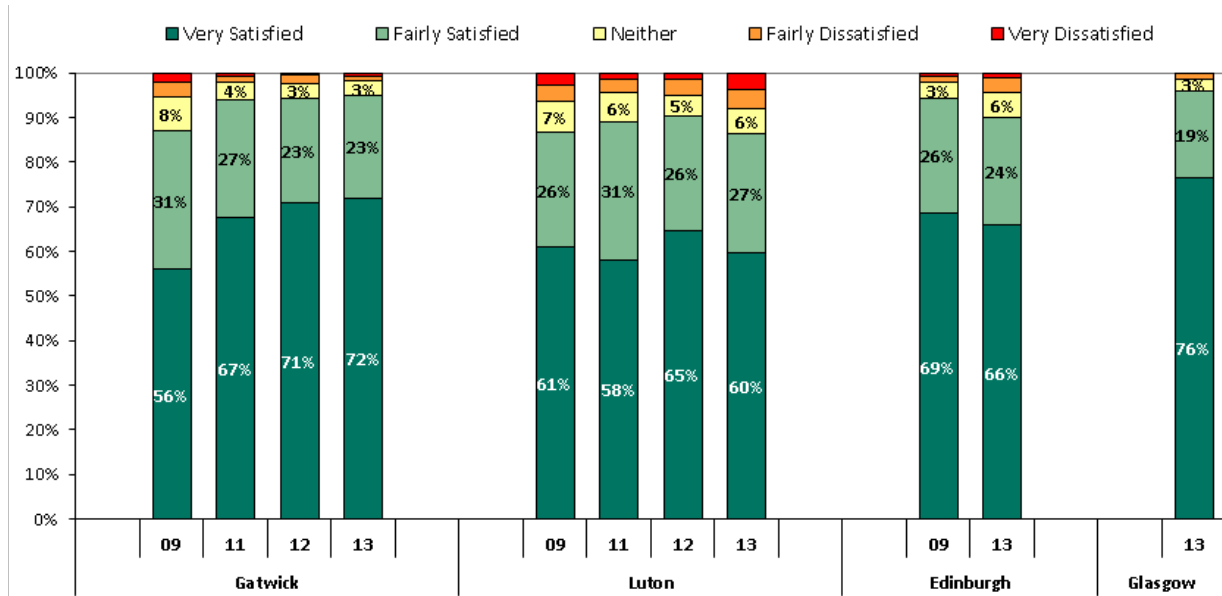
How satisfied are you with your experience of the security screening used at the airport today?

- A large majority (93%) of passengers surveyed in 2013 said they were very or fairly satisfied with their experience at security screening and over two thirds (68%) were very satisfied. At least 90% of respondents said they were very/fairly satisfied at each of the seven airports surveyed, with the exception of Luton, where 86% were very/fairly satisfied.
- Satisfaction at both **Heathrow** and **Gatwick** has increased since these airports were first surveyed. The proportion who were very or fairly satisfied has increased from 86% in 2008 to 93% in 2013 at Heathrow and from 87% in 2009 to 95% in 2013 at Gatwick. Both airports have also seen a significant increase in the proportion who said they were very satisfied (from 52% to 69% at Heathrow and from 56% to 72% at Gatwick).
- Improvement at **Stansted** has been less pronounced and is mainly due to an increase in the proportion who were fairly rather than very satisfied.
- At **Manchester** levels of satisfaction peaked in 2010 but have fallen slightly since, to 92% very/fairly satisfied in 2013. At Luton satisfaction peaked at 90% in 2012 but fell to 86% in 2013.
- At **Edinburgh** the proportion who were very/fairly satisfied has fallen from 94% when the airport was last surveyed in 2009 to 90% in 2013.
- Satisfaction was high at **Glasgow**, where these survey questions were asked for the first time in 2013, with 96% saying they were very/fairly satisfied and 76% saying they were very satisfied.

Satisfaction with security screening: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2013



Satisfaction with security screening: other airports surveyed in 2009-2013



- Satisfaction was slightly higher among leisure than business passengers, among passengers on charter compared to scheduled services and among long-haul passengers compared to domestic.

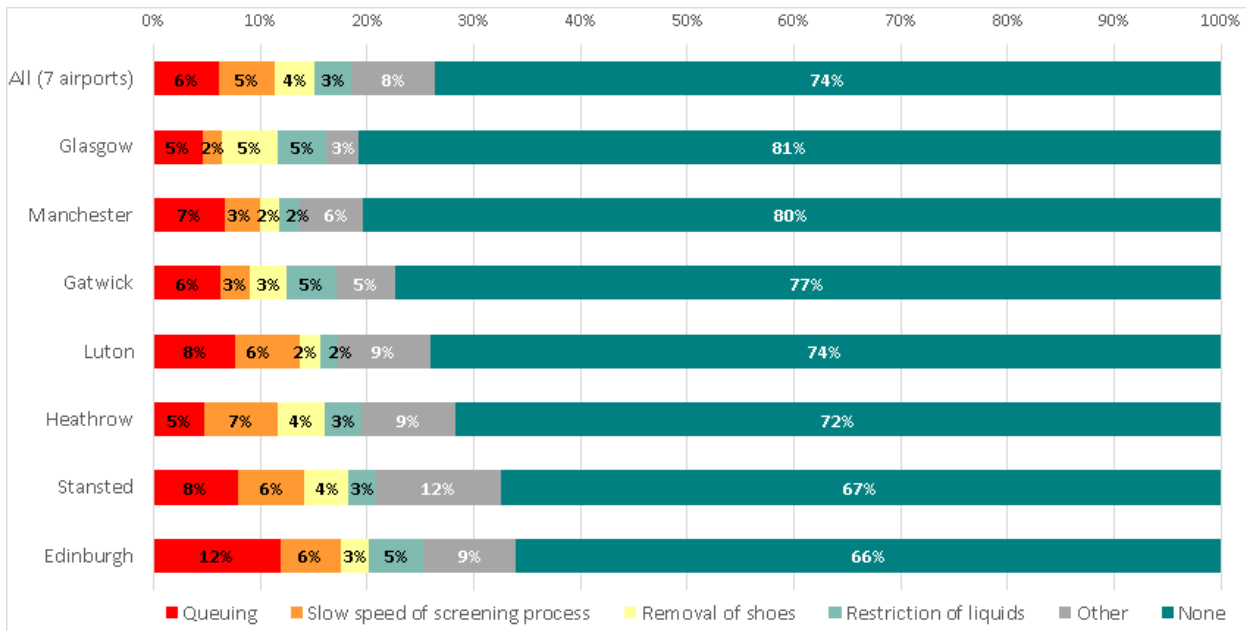
‘Detailed statistical tables with a breakdown by sub-groups (age, gender etc) and overall time series:

- [Table C2a and C2b](#)

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

- Nearly three quarters (74%) of respondents said there was no aspect of security screening with which they were least satisfied. This ranged from 66% at Edinburgh to 81% at Glasgow.
- The aspects of security screening with which passengers were least satisfied were **queuing** (cited by 6%) and **slow speed of security processing** (5%). Queuing was cited by 12% of respondents at Edinburgh with a further 6% citing slow speed of screening process. These aspects were also mentioned by a relatively high proportion of respondents at Stansted and Luton, with 8% citing queuing and 6% citing slow processing speed at both airports.
- **Removal of shoes** was mentioned by 4% of all passengers surveyed, **restriction of liquids** by 3% and **staff attitudes/politeness** by 2%.
- At the 5 airports surveyed each year since 2011, the proportion of passengers saying there was no aspect with which they were least satisfied has increased from 68% in 2011 to 72% in 2012 and 74% in 2013. Conversely there was a slight fall in the proportion of passengers mentioning specific aspects as least satisfactory, which was particularly marked at Gatwick.

Least satisfactory aspects of security screening, 2013



- The proportion of respondents citing queuing or slow speed of processing was slightly higher among business passengers than among leisure passengers. The proportion citing queuing was slightly higher at Gatwick North than at Gatwick South, which opened a new security area at the end of 2011.

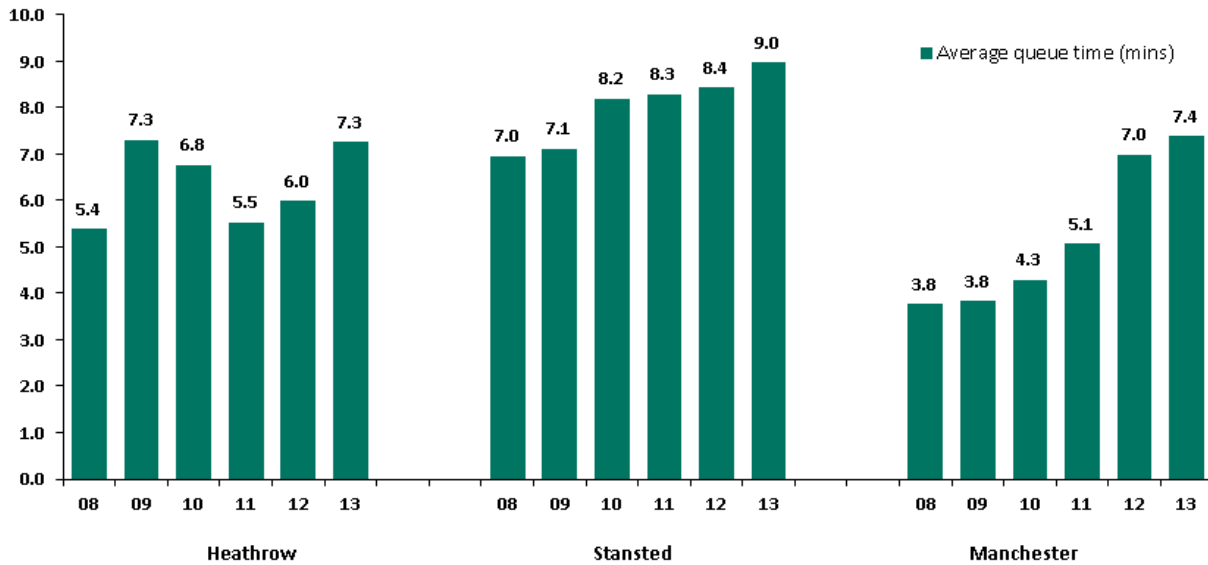
‘Detailed statistical tables with a breakdown by sub-groups (age, gender etc) and overall time series:

- [Table C3a and C3b](#)

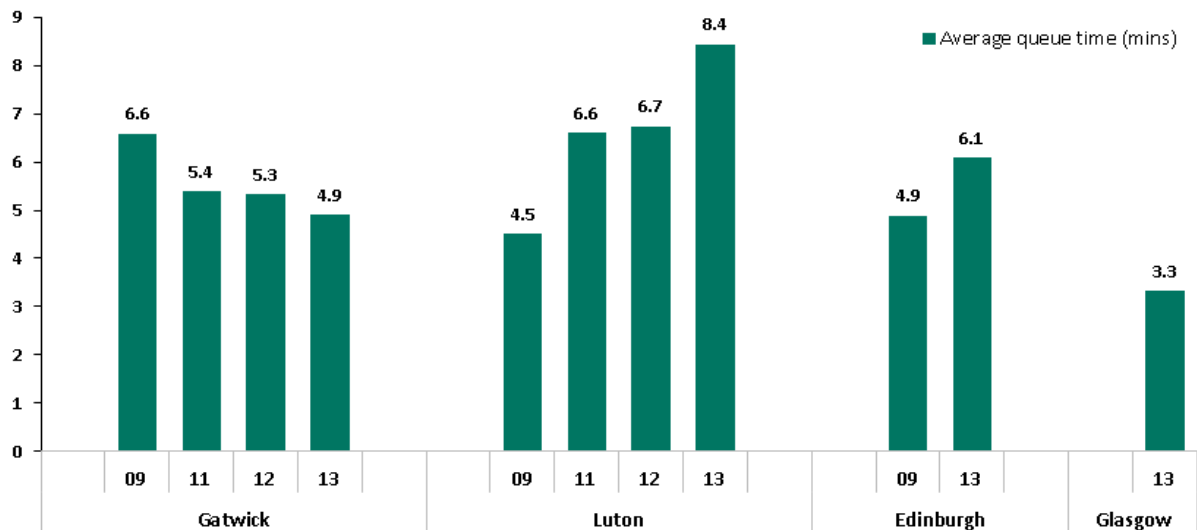
For how long, in minutes, did you queue when waiting to be security screened?

- The **average queue time** in 2013, based on passengers’ estimates of how long they queued, was 6.8 minutes. This ranged considerably between airports, from 3.3 minutes at Glasgow to 9.0 minutes at Stansted.
- Average perceived queue time has fallen at Gatwick, from 6.6 minutes in 2009 to 4.9 minutes in 2013, but has increased in recent years at Stansted, Manchester, Luton and Edinburgh. At Heathrow, the average queuing time has fluctuated since this question was first asked in 2008; having fallen from 7.3 in 2009 to 5.5 minutes in 2011 it increased back to 7.3 in 2013.

Perceived average queuing time at security screening based on passenger estimates: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2013

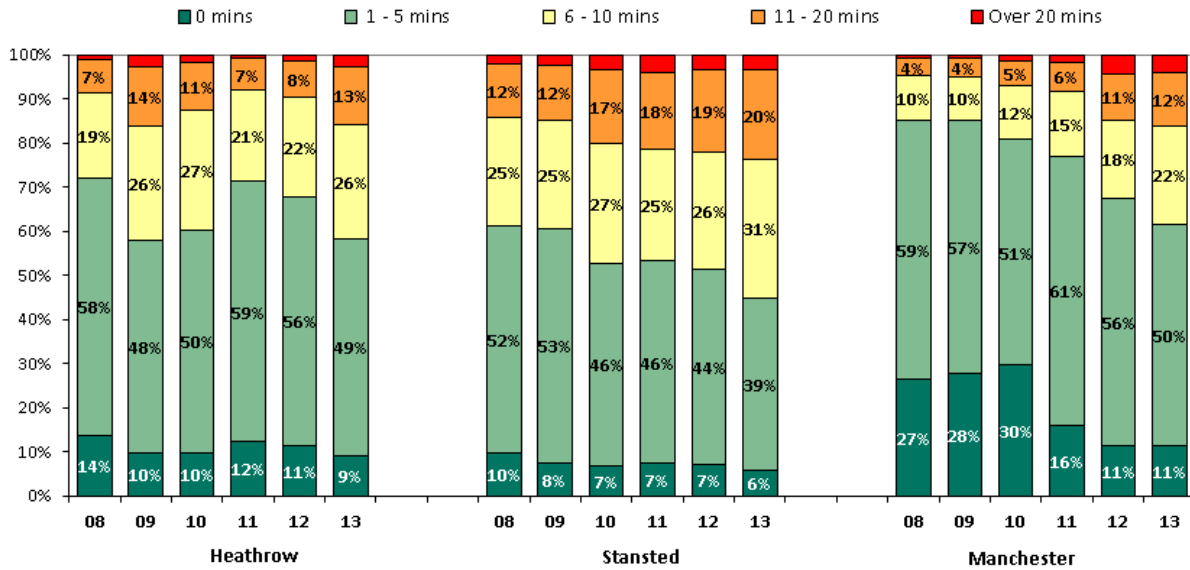


Perceived average queuing time at security screening based on passenger estimates: other airports surveyed in 2009-2013

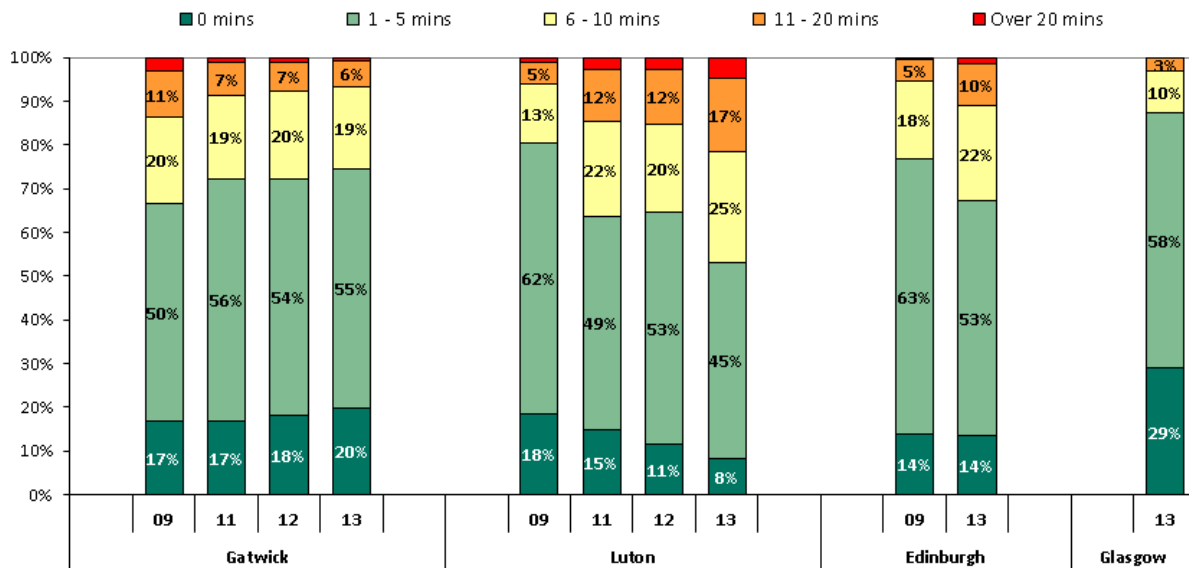


- Overall 62% of passengers surveyed said they queued for **5 minutes or less** ranging from 45% at Stansted to 87% at Glasgow. Conversely, the proportion who said they queued for **over 10 minutes** was lowest at Glasgow (3%) highest at Stansted (24%).
- At Heathrow, 58% queued for up to 5 minutes and 16% for more than 10 minutes.

Perceived security screening queuing time (banded) based on passenger estimates: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2013



Perceived security screening queuing time (banded) based on passenger estimates at other airports surveyed in 2009-2013



- 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 increased at Heathrow and Stansted between 2012 and 2013. At Gatwick, the CAA survey results show a fall in queuing times in 2013 while the SQR data suggest a slight increase.

- At Manchester, the increase in queue time in 2012 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.

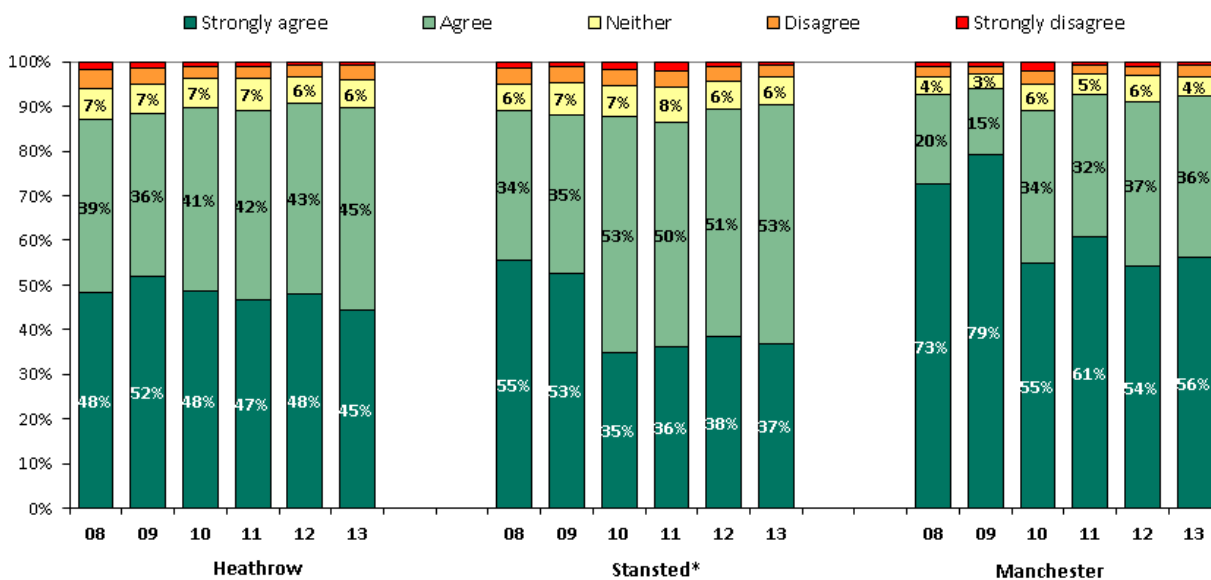
'Detailed statistical tables with a breakdown by sub-groups (age, gender etc) and overall time series:

- [Table C4a and C4b](#)

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

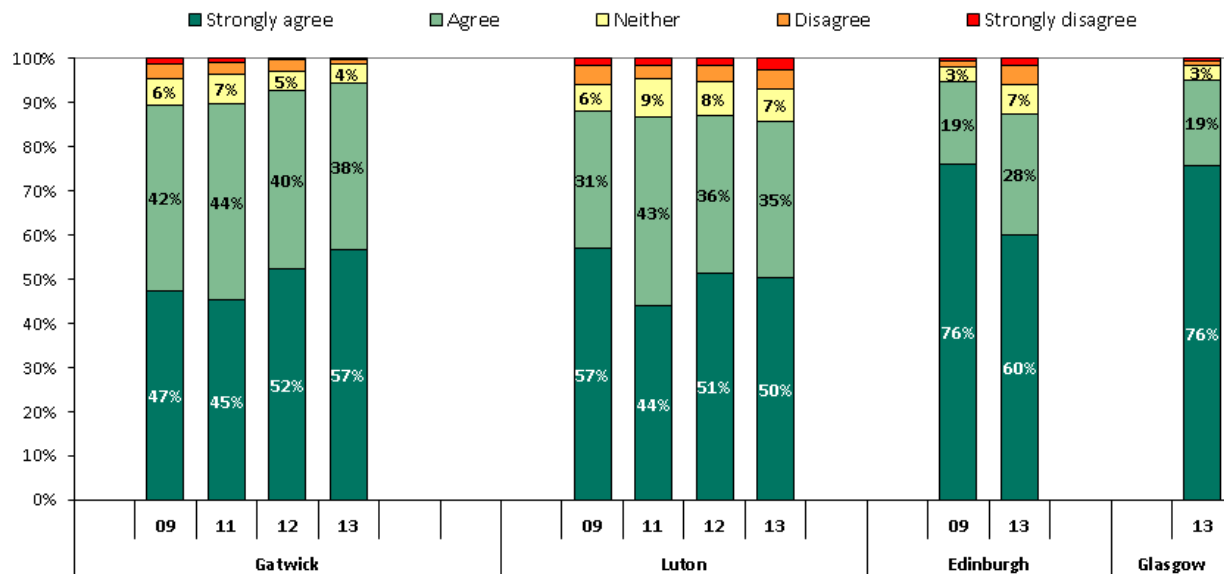
- Overall, a large majority (91%) of passengers agreed or strongly agreed that any inconvenience caused by security screening was acceptable, ranging from 86% at **Luton** to 95% at **Glasgow**. Among all passengers surveyed, 4% disagreed with this statement.
- The proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement was slightly higher among passengers travelling for leisure than on business (92% and 87% respectively), among those on charter compared to scheduled flights (96% and 91%) and among those travelling on long-haul than domestic flights (92% compared to 88%).
- 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 earlier years. At **Edinburgh**, the proportion agreeing has fallen from 95% in 2009 to 87% in 2013.

Agreement with acceptability of any inconvenience caused by security screening: Heathrow, Stansted and Manchester, 2008-2013



* 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 2009-2013



'Detailed statistical tables with a breakdown by sub-groups (age, gender etc) and overall time series:

- [Table C2a and C2b](#)

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 2013, 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, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. 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 and 2012. 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 2013.

- 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 passengers using Heathrow Terminal 4 were not asked the questions on security screening as interviews were conducted prior to screening. In 2010 to 2013 Heathrow Terminal 2 was not in operation.
- In 2013 these questions were only added to the survey at Edinburgh and Glasgow from the end of March so the results for these airports do not cover the full year.

Analysis

- The responses have been weighted to reflect the actual distribution of passengers by airport terminal and flight destination (domestic, short-haul and long-haul).
- 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.
- 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 in each year, it is not possible to compare the overall results for 2008 to 2013.
- Figures 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. A summary of key characteristics for each survey airport in 2012 is given in Annex B.
- 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

- 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.
- 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.

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]

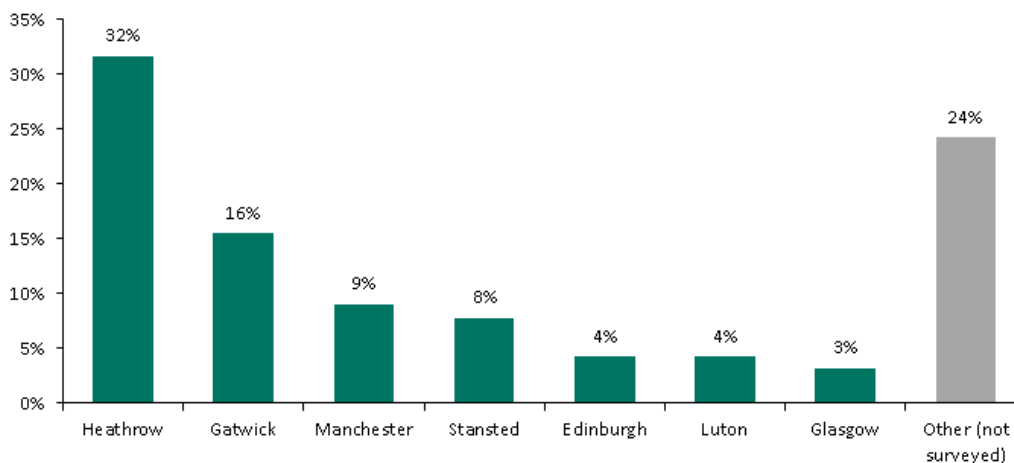
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End of questionnaire

Annex B: Characteristics of passengers at the surveyed airports

- In 2013, the seven airports surveyed included the six largest UK airports in terms of the number of terminal passengers together with Glasgow, which was the eighth largest. They accounted for 173 million passengers, over three quarters (76%) of the 228 million passengers at all UK airports in 2013.
- Heathrow was the largest 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 Edinburgh and Luton accounted for roughly half this amount (4%) and Glasgow for 3%.

Terminal passengers at the airports surveyed as a percentage of the total at all UK airports, 2013

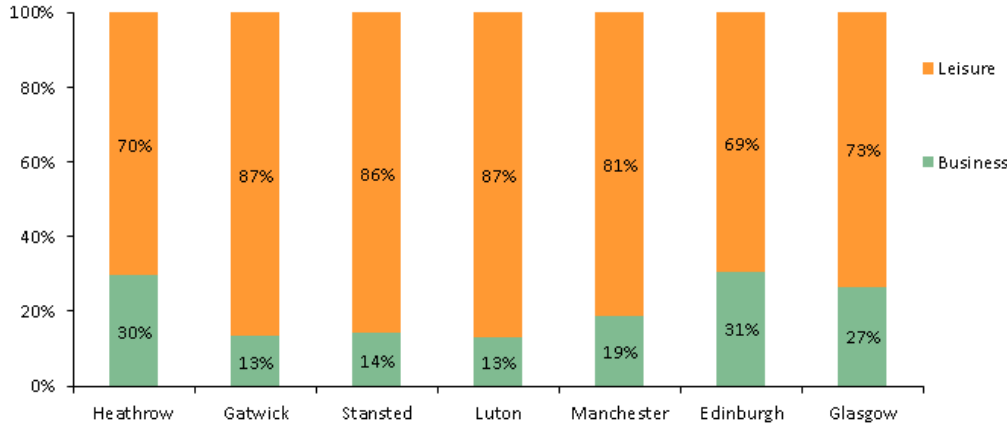


The seven airports surveyed differ not only in terms of size but also in terms of the type of passengers that use them (see [Table C1](#)). For example:

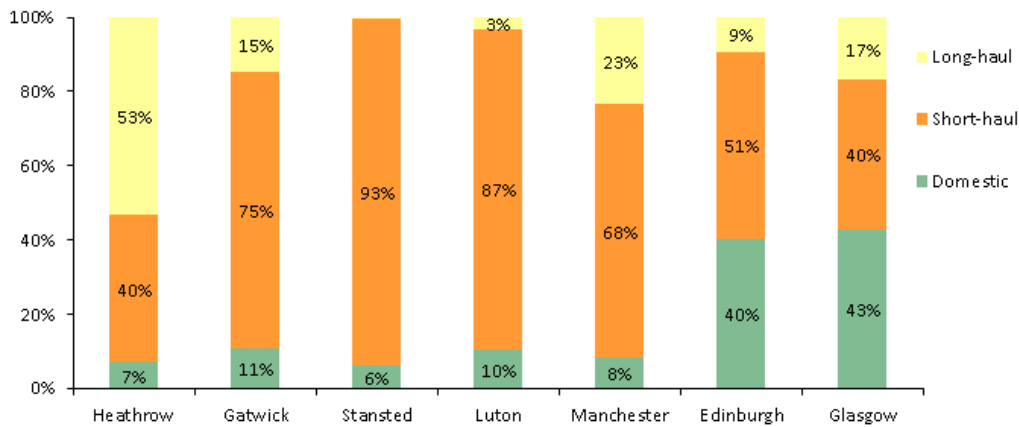
- In 2013, **Heathrow** had a much higher proportion of long-haul passengers (53%) and passengers who were foreign residents (60%) than the other airports. Relative to the other English airports surveyed, Heathrow also had a higher proportion travelling on business (30%).
- **Gatwick** had some long-haul flights, accounting for 15% of their passengers, and a higher proportion of passengers on charter flights than the other London airports (13%).
- **Manchester** had the highest proportion of passengers on charter flights (21%) and, after Heathrow, this airport had the highest proportion of long-haul passengers in the sample (23%).
- **Stansted** had a high proportion of passengers on short-haul flights (93%) and a relatively high proportion of foreign residents (44%). The age profile of passengers using Stansted is relatively young, with nearly half (46%) 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 (73%), passengers travelling for leisure (87%) and passengers on scheduled flights (96%).

- **Edinburgh** overtook Stansted in 2013 to become the fifth largest UK airport in terms of passengers. Both **Edinburgh** and **Glasgow** had a much higher proportion of passengers on domestic flights than the other airports surveyed (40% and 43% respectively) and a higher proportion travelling on business (31% and 27%). Among the airports included in the security survey, **Glasgow** had the highest proportion of passengers aged 65 and over (17%).

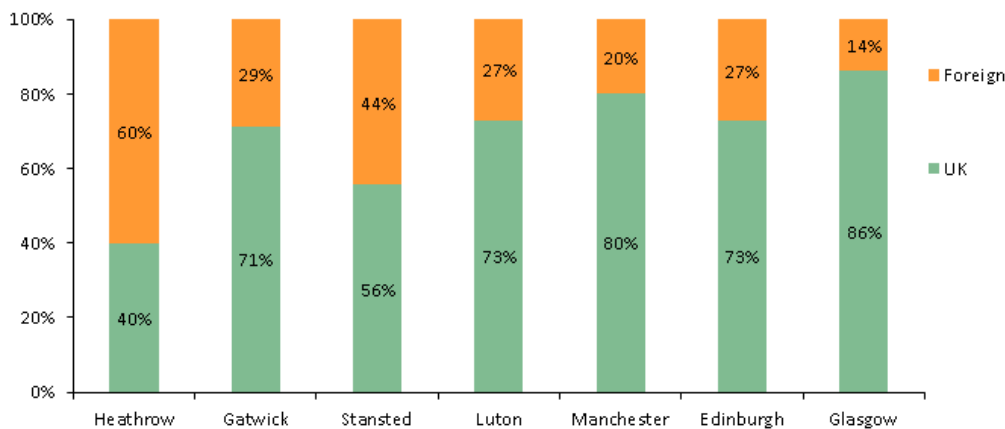
Terminal passengers by airport and purpose, 2013



Terminal passengers by airport and destination, 2013



Terminal passengers by airport and country of residence, 2013



Source: CAA Passenger Survey 2013