

# Heathrow lifts passenger cap



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Heathrow Airport (LHR) has announced today via a press release on its website that it is removing the cap on number of passengers from October 30 following a summer of growth.

The airport reports it served 18 million passengers throughout the summer, more than any other European hub, in spite of being hit harder than other European locations during lockdown.

Heathrow reports it is "working with airlines to agree on a highly targeted mechanism that, if needed, would align supply and demand on a small number of peak days in the lead up to Christmas. This will encourage demand during less busy periods and help to protect the heavier peaks and avoid flight cancellations due to resource pressures."

The press release warns, however, that while demand is stronger, it is not fully recovered. It forecasts that the total passenger numbers for 2022 will reach between 60 - 62 million, approximately 25% fewer than 2019. The airport notes headwinds of a global economic crisis, war in Ukraine and the impact of COVID-19 as factors making it "unlikely to return to pre-pandemic demand for a number of years, except at peak times."

Heathrow reports that it must recruit and train up to 25,000 security cleared people to support the airport ecosystem through these peak times. It is establishing a recruitment task force to help fill vacancies, working closely with the government on a review of airline ground handling and appointing a senior operational executive to work in joint working.

Underlying losses have increased to £400 million (US\$465) million) in the year-to-date as regulated income fails to cover costs, adding to the £4 billion (US\$4.6 billion) in the prior two years.

“We can be proud that everyone at Heathrow pulled together to serve consumers this summer - ensuring 18 million people got away on their journeys, more than any other airport in Europe, with the vast majority experiencing good service. We have lifted the summer cap and are working with airlines and their ground handlers to get back to full capacity at peak times as soon as possible.

"As we look to the future, we encourage the CAA to think again at stimulating the long-term investment that will deliver the smooth and predictable journeys consumer value most, rather than focusing on short-term pricing, which we have seen only benefits airline profits," said John Holland-Kaye, CEO at Heathrow Airport.