



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Airport Delays Four Times Longer than Claimed by BAA**

*Latest statistics revealed by Travel Counsellors*

(London, 29 February 2008) As BAA is accused of concealing the true extent of delays faced by UK air passengers, latest statistics from independent travel company Travel Counsellors reveal that delays are up to four times longer than claimed. This follows the Dispatches programme aired on Channel 4 on Monday 25 Feb highlighting the ongoing problems at UK airports.

Leading independent travel company Travel Counsellors has set up a delay-monitoring website [www.ukairportdelays.co.uk](http://www.ukairportdelays.co.uk) to gain a fuller picture of the airport experience individuals encounter in the UK.

BAA states that it almost always meets the CAA imposed target of 95% of passengers clearing security in no more than ten minutes, at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted. However as the great Easter getaway beckons, Travel Counsellors can reveal that at Gatwick the reported average wait by customers visiting [www.ukairportdelays.co.uk](http://www.ukairportdelays.co.uk) is 26 minutes and at Heathrow the reported average wait is a whopping 47 minutes to clear security alone. Stansted also fairs poorly with passengers taking 41 minutes taken from data supplied by customers.

Birmingham, East Midlands, Liverpool and Manchester also come out badly with reported waits of 40, 44, 45 and 23 minutes respectively to clear security. However Manchester is firmly at the bottom of the worst performing airports when it comes to immigration, with weary passengers having to wait for a reported one hour and eight minutes. Stansted also scores badly with customers reporting waits of 45 minutes. London City, Coventry and Prestwick on the other hand score highly with passengers not having to wait at all to pass through immigration and only having to wait a maximum of five minutes to get through security.

David Speakman, Founder and Chairman of Travel Counsellors says: "With Easter just around the corner, we are approaching one of the busiest times of year for travel. It seems that some of the UK's airports are performing way under the targets set by the CAA. With the BAA failing to acknowledge this, there is no immediate prospect of this situation changing, which is very frustrating for UK holidaymakers."

Launched in August 2007, independent website [www.ukairportdelays.co.uk](http://www.ukairportdelays.co.uk) was set up by Travel Counsellors specifically to give consumers the opportunity to log their frustrations about UK airports. To date the site has had nearly 800 travellers log their airport experiences and the site has successfully drawn attention to the public cry for improvements to be made at UK airports.

Mr Speakman adds; "The intention of the website is not to show a mean average, as the nature of the site will attract customers who feel that the wait is unreasonable. However the airports claim to measure an average delay and we believe that in the customer service arena the yardstick should always be maximum wait times, not average. The aim of all airports should be that all customers have a good experience, not just the majority. We encourage that all passengers make use of the site so that we can continue to campaign to improve the situation at UK airports."

The current league table of UK's top ten worst performing airports is as follows:

Airport	Security Wait	Immigration Wait
 <a href="#">Doncaster Finningley</a>	10 Mins	9 Mins
 <a href="#">Luton</a>	10 Mins	15 Mins
 <a href="#">Cardiff</a>	19 Mins	9 Mins
 <a href="#">Birmingham</a>	40 Mins	3 Mins
 <a href="#">Gatwick</a>	26 Mins	24 Mins
 <a href="#">Heathrow</a>	47 Mins	15 Mins
 <a href="#">East Midlands</a>	44 Mins	19 Mins
 <a href="#">Liverpool</a>	45 Mins	19 Mins
 <a href="#">Stansted</a>	41 Mins	45 Mins
 <a href="#">Manchester</a>	23 Mins	1 Hr 8 Mins

Source: [www.ukairportdelays.co.uk](http://www.ukairportdelays.co.uk) as at Friday 29 February 2008.

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**About Travel Counsellors:** Travel Counsellors PLC is one of the UK's largest independent travel companies with turnover at the end of its last financial year (Oct 31 2007) of £212 million, a 21% increase year on year. Founded in 1994 it currently has over 900 travel consultants who work from home with the support of over 170 staff at the company's head office in Bolton. The company operates in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, South Africa, Australia the US. In the UK Travel Counsellors places all customer money in a Trust account which guarantees a 100% refund in the event that a supplier collapses. Travel Counsellors was the winner of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2003-2008, the technology category of the 2005 CBI Growing Business Awards and was voted Travel Agent of the Year by readers of the Guardian, Observer and Guardian Unlimited in 2006 & 2007.

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