

Aviation security checks accelerated as government helps industry minimise travel disruption

- government has accelerated the national security vetting checks that all new aviation recruits must undergo, with Accreditation Checks being completed in around 5 days on average and Counter Terrorist Checks in under 10 days
- helps industry to get new employees, such as x-ray screeners, into the industry as quickly as possible, so it can meet the surge in demand for flights
- follows the government's 22-point plan for helping the industry tackle disruption, announced last week

Statistics show mandatory aviation sector national security checks are being processed in record time, as the industry works to rapidly fill vacancies in the face of heightened demand for flights this summer.

The government has introduced a range of measures to help process security checks as quickly as possible, resulting in around 97% of Accreditation Checks being completed in around 5 days on average, with Counter Terrorist Checks (CTC) in the Aviation sector being processed in under 10 days on average. This is a reduction from the 20-day average turnaround for CTC checks in March, before the priority measures for aviation sector applications were introduced.

The government has also already provided flexibility for employers to begin training new staff on certain modules while their background checks are ongoing, further speeding up the onboarding process, and is allowing HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) employment history letters to be used as a suitable form of reference check.

Stringent checks are required on all new aviation employees before they can start work, with the UK being a world leader in aviation security. With passengers experiencing last-minute cancellations and delays as a result of the aviation industry struggling to recruit enough staff in time to meet the current surge in demand, the government has focused on delivering these checks as quickly as possible without compromising security to help ensure people don't experience a repeat of the disruption at Easter during the summer holidays.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

These statistics demonstrate how the government is doing its bit to help deliver for passengers; now the industry must fulfil its responsibilities.

People have made huge sacrifices during the pandemic and deserve their flights to run on time, without complications, and without being cancelled last minute. While this is a challenging time for the sector, it is not acceptable for the current disruption to continue as we head into the summer peak. The public deserves to know now whether or not their flight will run over the summer, and so I reiterate my call for the industry to commit to deliver the flights they have scheduled, or to cancel them well in advance so people can make other arrangements.

Building on our 22-point plan to help the industry minimise disruption, we will continue to do everything in our power to ensure this summer is a great success for the British public.

The government announced a [22-point plan](#) last week designed to ensure passengers don't face a summer of disruption. This includes measures to help the industry recruit and train staff and ensure the delivery of realistic summer schedules.

Ministers have rejected calls to issue temporary visas for aviation workers, with staff shortages not being exclusive to the UK, but happening across Europe and the US too. Similar schemes in other sectors experiencing shortages, such as the HGV sector, have not been widely used and have not significantly contributed towards a solution.

Instead, the government is committed to building a resilient, well-paid British workforce, which will prove a far more effective, sustainable and long-term solution. To support this, government has already launched the [Aviation Skills Retention Platform](#) to help develop and hold onto UK workers.

Schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland are breaking up for summer, firing the starting gun on the busy summer holiday period – over 100 days after all remaining COVID-19 restrictions on international travel from the UK were lifted.