

# [News story: Government commits £1.8 million to fund innovation in aviation security](#)

Cutting-edge security technology could mean passengers see shorter queues and faster, more effective airport screening processes.

Eight projects have been awarded £1.8 million in government funding to develop innovative technology, which has the potential to bolster airport security while also speeding up the screening process for passengers.

The projects all apply novel approaches to aviation security which have the potential to improve threat detection capabilities. In addition to improving security, some of the projects have the potential to reduce the length of time passengers spend undergoing security checks.

One of the successful recipients of the funding is a small team based in Derbyshire, Security Screening Technologies, whose project uses sophisticated imaging to scan shoes for explosive materials.

The step-on shoe scanner being developed by the company can rapidly form high-contrast images of footwear which can then be analysed by computers that have been 'taught' to recognise threats. Any shoes which are flagged as having areas of concern could then undergo secondary screening.

The project could ultimately mean that passengers would no longer need to remove their shoes before going through airport central search, leading to reduced queuing times and a more customer-friendly experience.

Aviation Minister Baroness Sugg said:

This latest £1.8 million of funding invests in innovative projects that will ensure we are continuing to capitalise on pioneering research. The aim is to have a safer and smoother travel experience for air passengers.

The safety of people travelling on all modes of transport is our top priority and the Future Aviation Security Solutions programme is just one example of the huge importance we place on the security of passengers.

We have a proud history of the early adoption and use of cutting edge technology and this programme is helping to ensure we continue to lead the way in airport security.

The funding is part of the 5-year [Future Aviation Security Solutions \(FASS\)](#) programme, a multi-million pound initiative which seeks new solutions to

strengthen aviation security.

It will go towards supporting a range of projects with pioneering ideas to reduce security threats in airports. These include the use of electromagnetic imaging to detect items of concern in luggage, filtering samples of gas taken from cargo containers to test for explosives, and using machine learning techniques to identify threats on people and in bags.

A joint Department for Transport and Home Office programme, FASS works closely with industry to fund research and encourage innovation.

Security Minister, Ben Wallace said:

We are determined to harness the power of innovation and this ambitious programme will help us continue to use the best technologies as part of our aviation security.

Our work in this area is just one example of how the government is supporting industry, academia and small enterprises to improve our resilience and strengthen our defences against terrorism.

Another of the successful recipients of the funding is a team based in Wales called Sequestim who have designed an alternative walk-through people screening system. State of the art technology within the device could reduce the need for manual checks and mean passengers do not have to remove outer clothing.

The project could also benefit passengers by speeding up the screening process and reducing the risk of false alarms which can cause disruption to passengers and screening processes.

As passengers move past a highly-sensitive camera, the natural radiation from their bodies is measured and turned in to an image. Computer learning can be applied to detect the presence of any threat the passenger may be carrying.

Each project team will have 12 months to develop their technology into a fully functioning prototype that could be trialled at airports.