

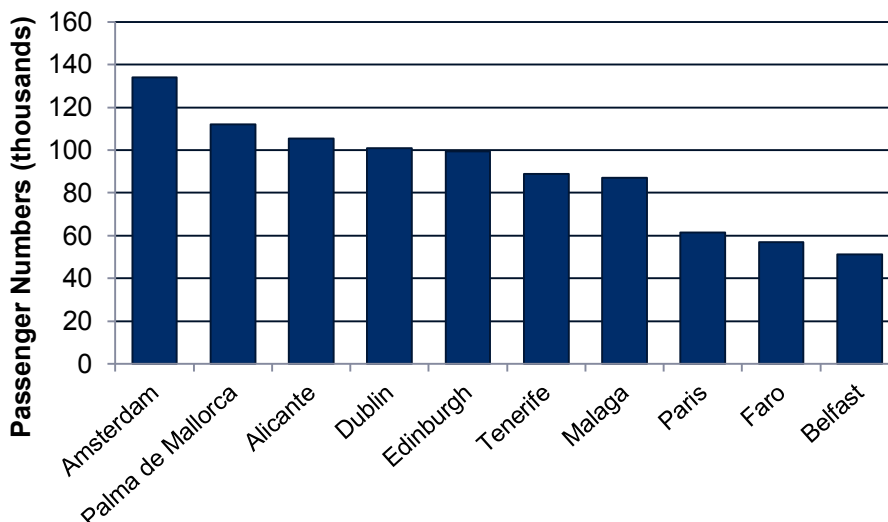
## Air transport in Wales during 2017

27 June 2018  
SB 39/2018

### Key points

- The total number of terminal passengers (arrivals and departures) using Cardiff International Airport increased by 8.7 per cent between 2016 and 2017, to 1.47 million ([Chart 2](#)).
- During 2017 there were 82 international routes that operated out of Cardiff International Airport, 5 more than in 2016.
- There were around 29,000 aircraft movements at Cardiff International Airport in 2017, a 10.2 per cent increase on the 2016 figures ([Chart 10](#)).
- Amsterdam was the most common international destination and Edinburgh the most common domestic destination ([Chart 1](#)).

**Chart 1: Most common destinations from Cardiff Airport, 2016 and 2017**



Source: Civil Aviation Authority

### About this bulletin

This Statistical Bulletin presents information about Cardiff International Airport, the only major domestic and international airport in Wales. The information was provided by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and includes some data from its 2015 passenger survey. Further information about the source data is provided in the notes section.

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## Introduction

Air transport is an important driver for economic development. It connects Wales to the global economy which facilitates inward investment and trade. It provides a gateway for business and leisure passengers, which is an enabler for tourism and helps support industry.

**The passenger data presented in this report are the total number of *passenger journeys* (outbound and inbound flights combined), *not* the number of different individual passengers. This is because it is not possible to identify arrivals and departures from the source data. In this report we use the term terminal passengers, or passengers, to mean the total number of passenger journeys. On many routes the number of individual passengers is likely to be very close to half the total number of passenger journeys, because most are return journeys.**

During 2017, there were 288 million passenger journeys through UK airports with Heathrow the busiest (78.0 million), followed by Gatwick (45.6 million), Manchester (27.8 million) and Stansted (25.9 million). Cardiff was the 20th busiest airport in the UK with 1.47 million terminal passengers, which was 0.5 per cent of the UK total.

## Cardiff Airport

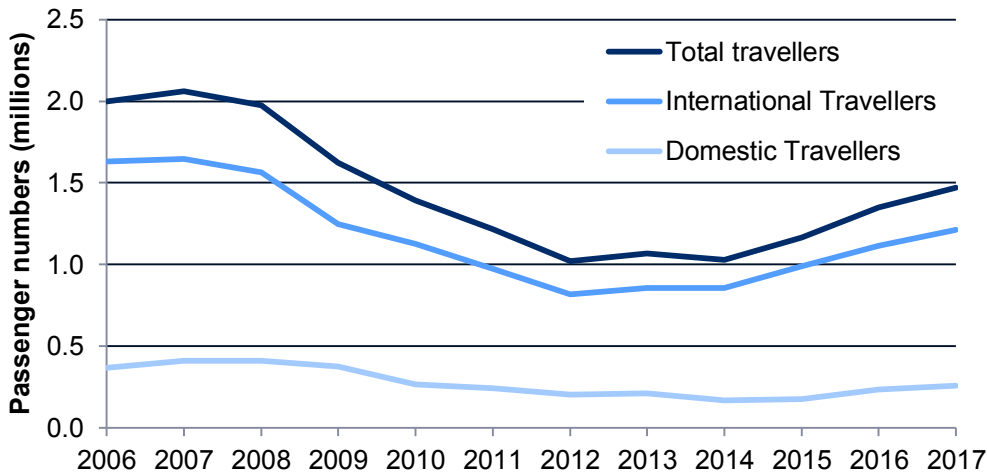
Cardiff Airport is the only major domestic and international airport in Wales. In 2017 it saw an increase of 8.7 per cent in passengers to 1.47 million, compared with 2016. There was an increase in the number of routes in 2017 with Flybe and Thomson Airways being the largest carriers. 82.4 per cent of passengers flew to international destinations and 17.6 per cent used domestic routes.

## Long term trends

There was a 50 per cent fall in total passengers at Cardiff Airport between 2007 and 2012, from 2.1 million to 1.0 million ([Chart 2](#)). This corresponded with the global recession, which resulted in some carriers reducing capacity and others ceasing trading altogether.

Passengers have increased by 43 per cent since 2014, but are still some way below the peak of 2007. 2017 saw an increase of 8.7 per cent in passengers when compared with 2016.

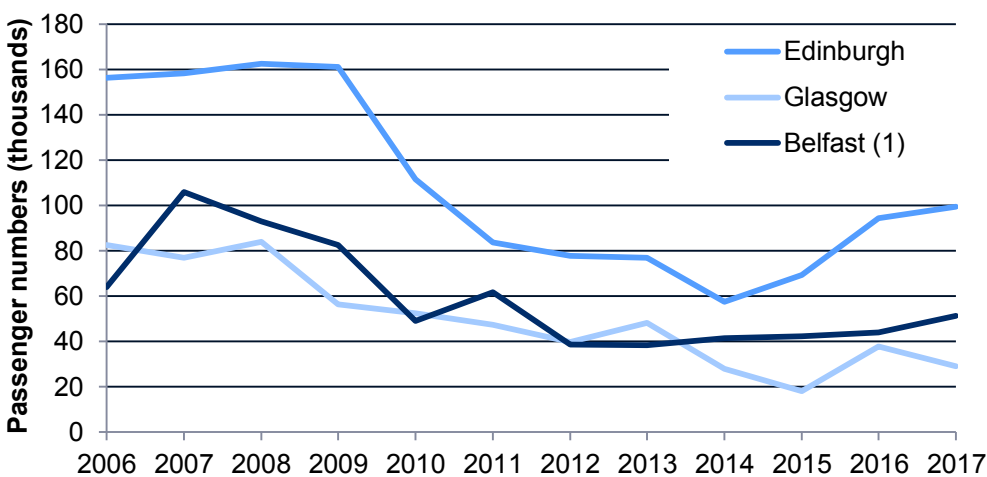
**Chart 2: Terminal passengers at Cardiff Airport from 2006 to 2017**



Source: Civil Aviation Authority

On the key domestic routes, there were falls in passengers for Belfast and Edinburgh after peaks in 2007 and 2008 respectively, although both have seen increases in recent years ([Chart 3](#)). Despite an increase in 2016, passenger numbers along the Glasgow route have been falling overall since 2008.

**Chart 3: Most used domestic routes from Cardiff airport, 2006 to 2017**



Source: Civil Aviation Authority

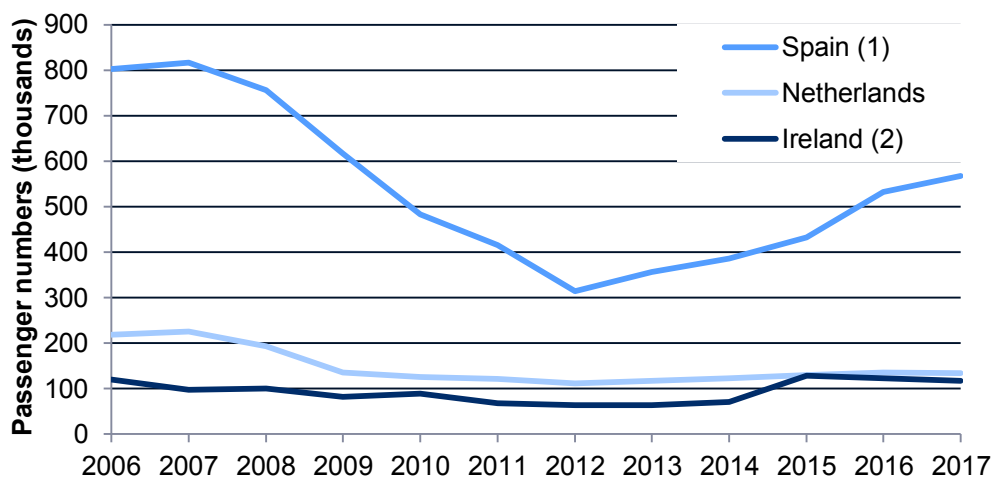
**Notes:**

(1) Includes Belfast City and Belfast International Airport

International passenger numbers also fell after peaking at 1.6 million in 2007, down to 0.8 million in 2012. Thereafter, there has been a steady increase to 1.2 million in 2017.

- 567,000 passengers travelled to Spain in 2017, a 7 per cent increase from 2016 ([Chart 4](#)). This followed a 62 per cent fall between 2007 and 2012. Passengers numbers for the Netherlands have been relatively steady in recent years, having fallen from a peak of 226,000 in 2007 to 112,000 in 2012.
- There has been a slight fall in passengers for Ireland in each of the last three years. This followed an 80 per cent increase in 2015 after the introduction of Flybe routes to Dublin and Cork.

**Chart 4: Most common international destinations from Cardiff airport, 2006 to 2017**



Source: Civil Aviation Authority

**Notes:**

(1) Includes Canary Islands

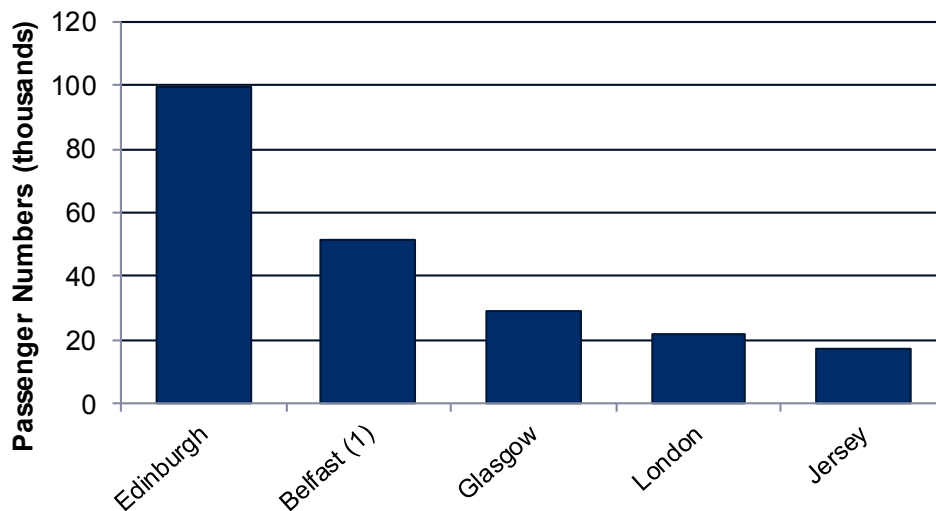
(2) Refers to the Republic of Ireland only

## Domestic and international routes in 2017

### Domestic routes

- 259,000 passengers travelled to or from other UK airports in 2017. The largest proportion of these passengers travelled between the main domestic routes of Edinburgh (99,000), Belfast (51,000), Glasgow (29,000), London (21,000) and Jersey (17,000).
- There was an increase of over 70 per cent in the number of passengers travelling to/from London when compared with 2016. This increase was driven by the introduction of a new route to London City in September 2016 to cover the six weeks that the Severn rail tunnel was closed, which was subsequently extended to October 2017.
- Of the 5 most used domestic routes in 2017, only flights to/from Glasgow saw a fall in passengers compared with 2016.
- Overall, 23,000 more passengers used Cardiff Airport to travel to other UK airports in 2017 than in 2016, an increase of 9.7 per cent.

**Chart 5: Most common UK destinations from Cardiff Airport in 2017**



**Notes:**

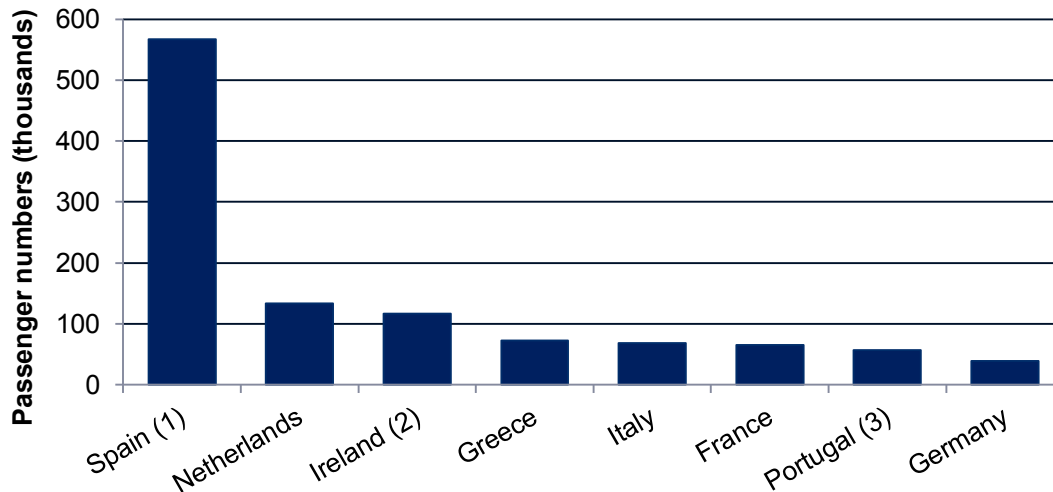
(1) Includes Belfast City and Belfast International Airport

Source: Civil Aviation Authority

## International routes

During 2017, 1.2 million terminal passengers travelled between Cardiff airport and overseas destinations ([Chart 6](#)).

**Chart 6: Most common overseas destinations from Cardiff Airport in 2017**



Source: Civil Aviation Authority

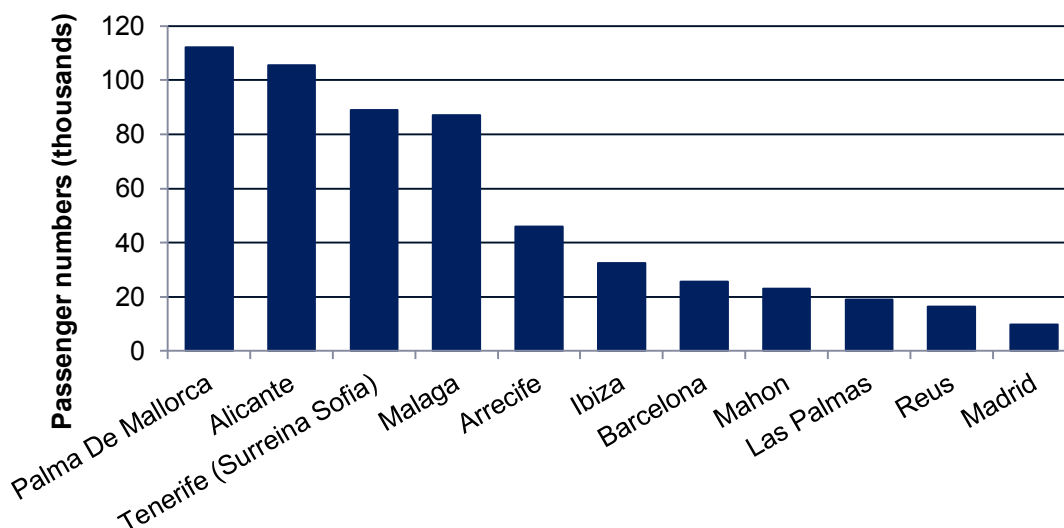
**Notes:**

- (1) Includes Canary Islands
- (2) Refers to the Republic of Ireland only
- (3) Excludes Madeira

## Spain

Spain is the most common destination with passengers 567,000 passengers; of which 155,000 visited the Canary Islands ([Chart 7](#)). Spain represents 46.9 per cent of all International travel through Cardiff Airport and 38.6 per cent of total travel. The key destinations to the Spanish mainland were Palma de Mallorca (112,000), Alicante (105,000) and Malaga (87,000). In the Canary Islands, Tenerife was the most visited destination with 89,000 visitors followed by Arrecife (46,000).

**Chart 7: Main Spanish destinations from Cardiff Airport in 2017**

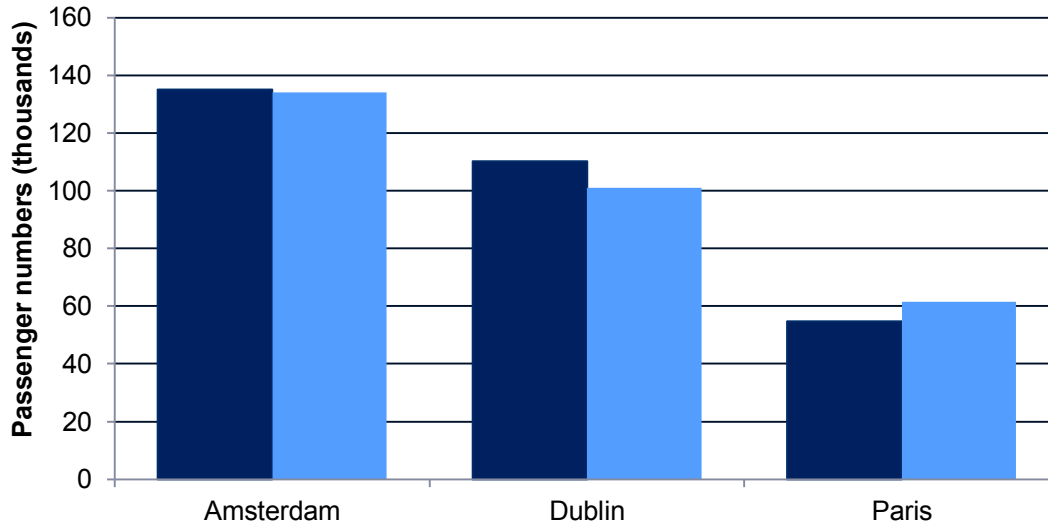


Source: Civil Aviation Authority

## European hubs – Amsterdam, Dublin and Paris

Key international routes are to Amsterdam in the Netherlands (134,000 passengers), Dublin in the Republic of Ireland (100,000) and Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport in France (61,000). These airports make up nearly a quarter of all international travel through Cardiff Airport ([Chart 8](#)). Paris, Amsterdam and Dublin are key hub cities that offer Cardiff Airport users the opportunity for onward connections to a wider range of destinations.

**Chart 8: Main Dutch, Irish (Republic of) and French destinations from Cardiff Airport in 2017**

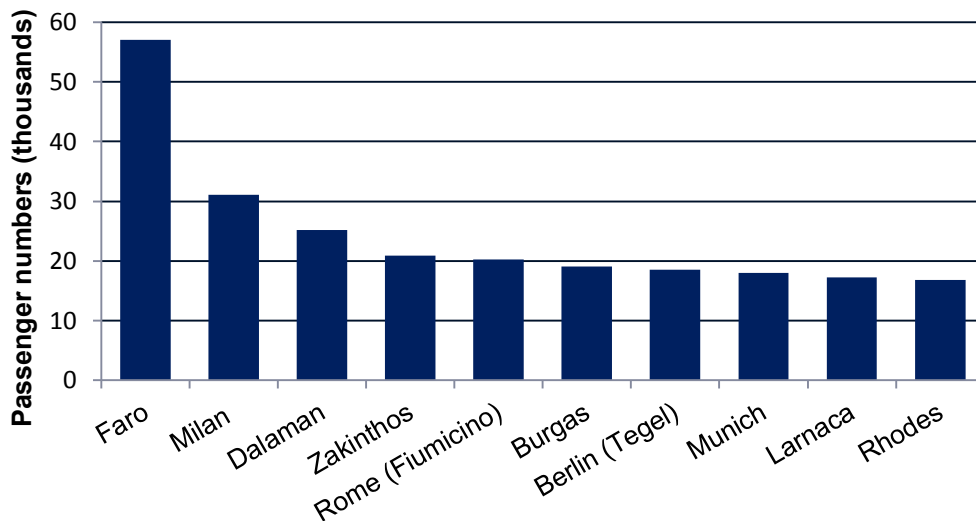


Source: Civil Aviation Authority

## Other destinations

Faro was the most visited of the other destinations with 57,000 terminal passengers. There were 73,000 terminal passengers for Greek destinations like Zakinthos (21,000) and Rhodes (17,000). Other common destinations include Milan (31,000 passengers), the coastal plain of Dalaman in Turkey (25,000) and Rome (20,000) ([Chart 9](#)).

**Chart 9: Other destinations from Cardiff Airport in 2017**



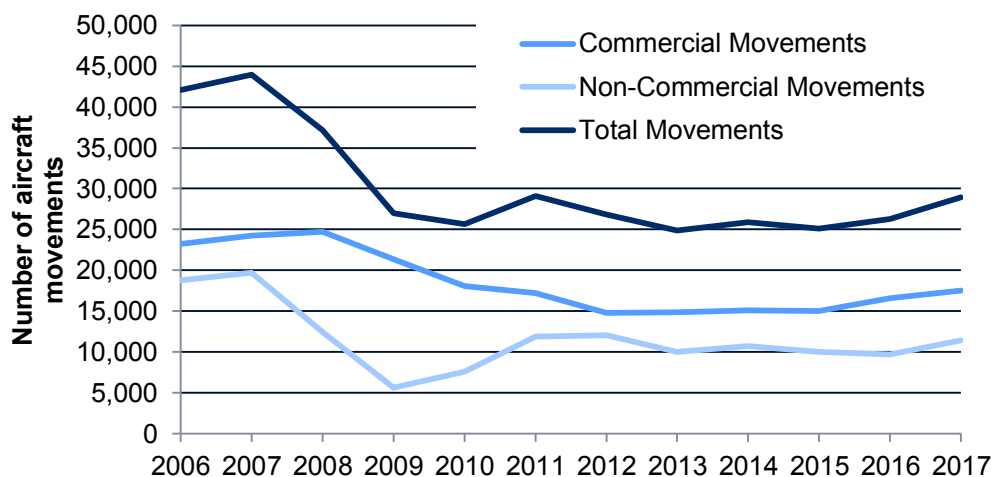
Source: Civil Aviation Authority

## Aircraft movements

An aircraft movement is an aircraft taking off or landing at an airport. Commercial aircraft movements involve any aircraft which are engaged in the transport of passengers or cargo on commercial terms, as well as positioning flights and local movements. Non-commercial movements cover all other types of flight, including private and Aero Club flights.

In 2017, there were 28,900 aircraft movements at Cardiff International Airport, an increase of 10.2 per cent compared with 2016 ([Chart 10](#)). The number of movements fell from a peak of 44,000 in 2007 to 24,900 in 2013, and there have been increases in each of the last 2 years.

**Chart 10: Number of aircraft movements at Cardiff Airport from 2006 to 2017**



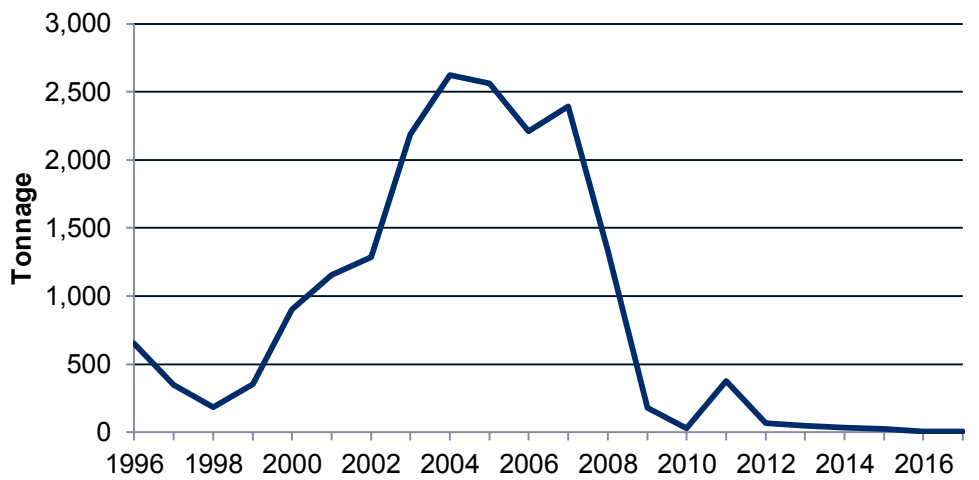
Source: Civil Aviation Authority



## Air freight

Historically, the volume of freight moving through Cardiff Airport has been volatile ([Chart 11](#)). The volume peaked in 2004 at 2,600 tonnes, but fell by 93 per cent between 2007 and 2009, from 2,400 to 178 tonnes. Thereafter it has remained at low levels and in 2017 just 4 tonnes of freight was moved through the airport, the lowest figure on record. Users of air freight include those with high value goods which need to be transported in small quantities or perishable goods, such as food and medicine, which have a short lifespan. For example, items commonly transported by air include electronics, telecoms, vehicles and auto parts, and biotech and health products.

**Chart 11: Freight at Cardiff Airport, 1996 to 2017**



Source: Civil Aviation Authority

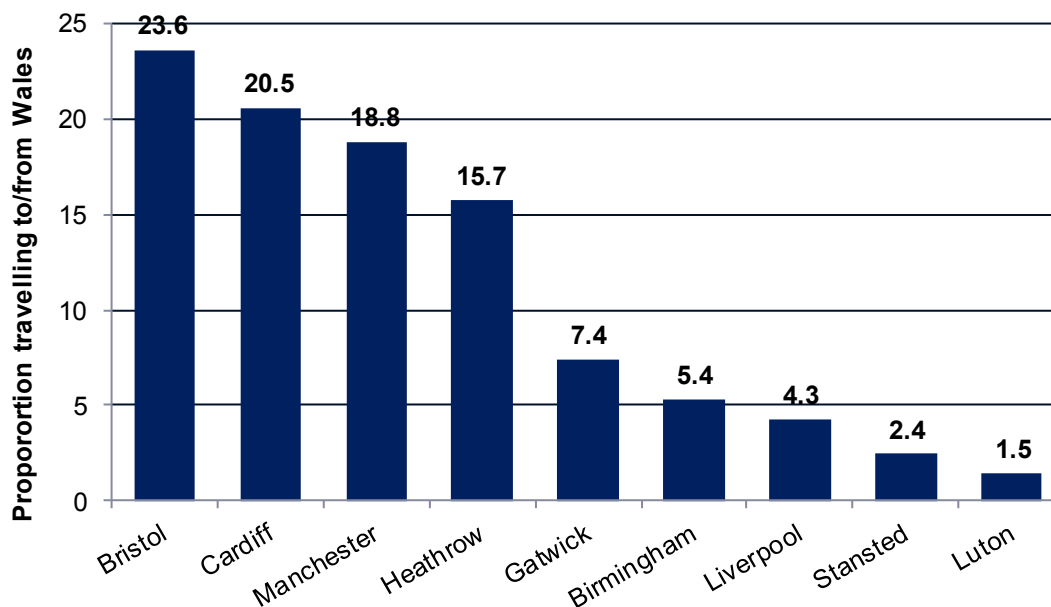
## Air passenger survey

The CAA's departing passenger survey can be used to identify which airports are used by people travelling to or from Wales. The survey collects data from a sample of UK airports annually. The latest survey to include all of the major airports used by travellers to and from Wales was conducted in 2015.

### Which airports are used by people in Wales?

Of the surveyed airports, 20.5 per cent of air passengers travelling to or from Wales in 2015 used Cardiff airport. However, Bristol was the proportionately most used airport for passengers travelling to or from Wales, with 23.6 per cent of all passengers travelling to or from Wales. Manchester and Heathrow made up the top four, which together accounted for more than three quarters of all passengers travelling to or from Wales.

**Chart 12: Proportion of air passengers with journeys starting and ending in Wales using each of the major airports, 2015**



Source: Civil Aviation Survey Passenger Survey Report

The 2015 survey showed that 4.3 million scheduled passengers indicated that Wales was either their point of origin or destination. For charter passengers the equivalent number was 964,000 (Table 1). The airports covered in this survey included Birmingham, Gatwick, Heathrow, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester and Stansted, which along with Cardiff and Bristol were the other main airports used by people travelling to or from Wales in 2015.

**Table 1: Origin/Destination of terminating passengers at the 2015 survey airports (1)**

<i>Number (thousands of people) and percentage</i>			
<b>Airport</b>	<b>People travelling to/from Wales</b>	<b>Total terminal passengers</b>	<b>Percentage of passengers travelling to/from Wales</b>
Bristol	1,234	6,343	19.5%
Cardiff	1,075	1,122	95.8%
Manchester	983	21,991	4.5%
Heathrow	822	47,919	1.7%
Gatwick	389	36,973	1.1%
Birmingham	280	9,520	2.9%
Liverpool	226	4,203	5.4%
Stansted	128	21,421	0.6%
Luton	78	12,001	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,215</b>	<b>161,493</b>	<b>3.2%</b>

Source: Welsh Government analysis of the CAA Passenger Survey Report

**Note:**

(1) Please note that the sum of scheduled and chartered passengers in Table 2 may not sum to the totals in Table 1 due to rounding

**Table 2: Air travel at the 2015 survey airports by people whose journeys origin or final destination lies in Wales (1)**

<i>Numbers (thousands of people) and proportion of total (percentages)</i>				
<b>Airport</b>	<b>Scheduled</b>		<b>Charter</b>	
	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
Bristol	1054	85%	180	15%
Cardiff	607	56%	468	44%
Manchester	806	82%	177	18%
Heathrow	815	99%	7	1%
Gatwick	326	84%	63	16%
Birmingham	216	77%	64	23%
Liverpool	226	100%	0	0%
Stansted	126	98%	2	2%
Luton	77	99%	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,253</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>18%</b>

Source: Welsh Government analysis of the CAA Passenger Survey Report

**Note:**

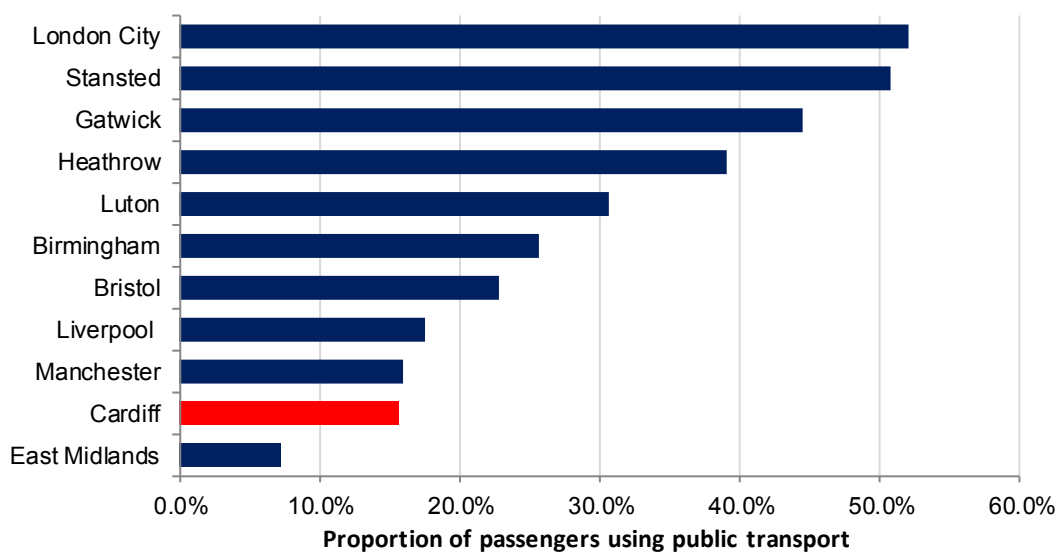
(1) Please note that the sum of scheduled and chartered passengers in Table 2 may not sum to the totals in Table 1 due to rounding

## What proportion of journeys to the airport involve public transport?

Please note that this section also uses the 2015 air passenger survey, as the equivalent figures for 2017 are unavailable.

The CAA's Passenger Survey also shows the mode of transport used by air passengers to travel to and from the airport. [Chart 13](#) shows that during 2015, 15.6 per cent of passengers travelling through Cardiff airport used public transport; which is lower than the majority of most other competitor airports. East Midlands at 7.2 per cent was the only airport lower than Cardiff. A greater proportion of people travelled by public transport to Bristol airport (22.8 per cent), than travelled to Cardiff airport. This is the underlying context for proposals to improve public transport access to Cardiff airport. The airport with the highest proportion travelling to and from the airport by public transport was London City at 52.1 per cent. This was closely followed by Stansted at 50.7 per cent. Gatwick (44.4 per cent), Heathrow (39.0 per cent) and Luton (30.6 per cent) had the next highest proportion of terminal passengers travelling to and from the airport by public transport. The London airports having the highest proportion of passengers using public transport is not surprising as they are better served by public transport than other airports.

**Chart 13: Proportion of terminal passengers using public transport to get to or from the airport, 2015**



Source: Welsh Government analysis of the CAA Passenger Survey Report

## Notes

### 1 Context - Related publications

The Department for Transport produce a series bringing together documents relating to [UK Aviation Statistics](#).

Transport Scotland produce a compendium publication titled "[Scottish Transport Statistics](#)" which includes a chapter on Air Transport.

The Department for Regional Development in Northern Ireland produce a publication titled "[Northern Ireland Transport Statistics – 2016-17](#)", Chapter 7 includes information on Air Transport.

### 2 Data source

The information on air transport through Cardiff Airport in this Bulletin and associated StatsWales tables reproduces the statistics compiled by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Its work is gratefully acknowledged. The CAA data are outside the scope of National Statistics. The information can be found from the following [link](#), including the CAA's own notes about the figures.

### 3.1 Definitions

The statistics in this bulletin relate to Cardiff International Airport as this is the only major domestic and international airport in Wales.

Up to 2000, all statistics include Air Taxi operations (defined for statistical purposes as charter flights utilising aircraft of less than 15 tonnes MTWA). From 2001, air taxis are included in the total of air transport movements but traffic carried, both passenger and freight, on air taxi services is excluded.

### 3.2 Glossary

*Air transport movements:* Landings or take offs of aircraft engaged in the transport of passengers or cargo on commercial terms. All scheduled service movements, whether loaded, empty, or positioning, and charter movements transporting passengers or cargo and air taxi movements are included. For the purpose of these statistics, where flights are operated on a sub-charter basis the operator is identified according to the flight number, an internal flight is counted as a single air transport movement.

*Domestic service:* Services flown entirely within the United Kingdom, Isle of Man or Channel Islands.

*Freight:* The weight of property carried on an aircraft including for example the weight of vehicles, excess baggage and diplomatic bags, but excluding mail and passengers' and crews' permitted baggage. Freight in transit through the airport on the same aircraft is excluded.

*International Service:* Services flown between the United Kingdom, including the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands and places outside.

*Non-scheduled or Charter Services:* All air transport movements other than scheduled services.

*Passengers:* All revenue and non-revenue passengers on air transport movement flights.

*Scheduled services:* Those performed according to the published timetable including supplementary timetables, available for use by the members of the public.

*Terminal passenger:* A passenger joining or leaving an aircraft at the reporting airport. A passenger travelling between two reporting airports is counted twice, once at each airport. A passenger who changes from one aircraft to the other, carrying the same flight number is treated as a terminal passenger.

*Transit passenger:* A passenger who arrives and departs from a reporting airport on the same aircraft. Each transit passenger is counted only once.

#### 4. CAA departing passenger survey – topics covered in survey questions

About the person	The airport and airline	About the Journey
Male/female...Age (in bands)	Scheduled or charter airline	Trip origin (if not home location)
Nationality	When was ticket booked	How did they get to (and from) airport (i.e. private or public transport - 30 categories used)
Which country living in for last 12 months	Type of ticket	
Ethnicity	Cost of flight	How many different modes of transport used during journey to airport, and what they were
Disability (& satisfaction with assistance at airport)		How long (time) was journey to airport
Home location (for UK and Ireland) - postcode		Purpose of trip
Business passengers: Business of firm/ organisation Occupation and job title Income (personal - in bands)		Destination airport
		Main destination (Country, town/city)
		Leisure passengers: Do you own property at...
Leisure passengers: How many people in household (& under 16) Occupation of chief earner Income (household - in bands)		If a return ticket: How long have you or will you stay away?
		How many times flown (anywhere) in last 12 months
How many people in your travel group?		How many times flown on this route in last 12 months
How many people came to see you off?		

Plus more detailed questions for transit passengers and for passengers with journeys involving more than one airline trip to complete their journey

## **5 Key quality information**

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability.

### **5.1 Relevance**

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor air transport trends and as a baseline for further analysis.

### **5.2 Accuracy**

This is described by the CAA at the link given under 'data source' above.

### **5.3 Timeliness and punctuality**

The information in the bulletin, covering air transport through Cardiff Airport, is based on the most recent annual UK Airport Statistics from the CAA.

### **5.4 Accessibility and clarity**

This Statistical Bulletin is pre-announced and then published on the [Statistics for Wales](#) website, with the underlying figures published on [StatsWales](#). Historically, this information was released in Chapter 11 of 'Welsh Transport Statistics' and excel spreadsheets.

### **5.5 Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)**

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

## **Further details**

The document is available at: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/air-travel/?lang=en>

## **Next update**

July 2019

## **We want your feedback**

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [stats.transport@gov.wales](mailto:stats.transport@gov.wales).

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