

Slots waiver extended in boost to UK airlines

News story

Move provides aviation sector with much-needed flexibility and protects environment as airlines will not have to operate carbon-inefficient 'ghost flights' to retain their slots.



The government has today (26 February 2021) introduced legislation to extend the airports slot allocation waiver, further supporting the aviation industry through the upcoming summer months.

Acting on calls for relief from the aviation sector, the legislation will support the industry through a period where air travel is likely to be lower than other years – protecting future connectivity and preventing airlines from operating high-cost carbon-inefficient 'ghost flights' to retain historic rights to slots.

Due to expire in spring, the legislation to extend the waiver will come into force from 26 March 2021 – 2 days before the start of the summer slot season. This will provide much needed flexibility, ensuring that airlines do not have to operate flights at least 80% of the time to retain their slots.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

I want to restart international travel as soon as it is safe and the slots waiver is a critical part of making that happen.

With airlines flying a smaller proportion of their usual schedules, the waiver means carriers can reserve their finances, reduce the need for environmentally damaging 'ghost flights' and allow normal services to immediately restart when the pandemic allows.

This is the latest initiative introduced by the government to support the industry and follows last month's launch of the [Airport and Ground Operations](#)

[Support Scheme](#), offering up to £8 million of support for commercial airports and ground handlers.

It also comes as the Prime Minister this week announced that the relaunched [Global Travel Taskforce](#) will deliver a report on 12 April 2021 outlining a framework to restart international travel, as wider restrictions are lifted over the coming months.

Following this, the government will issue further guidance on when international travel should resume.

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