

8 May 2019  
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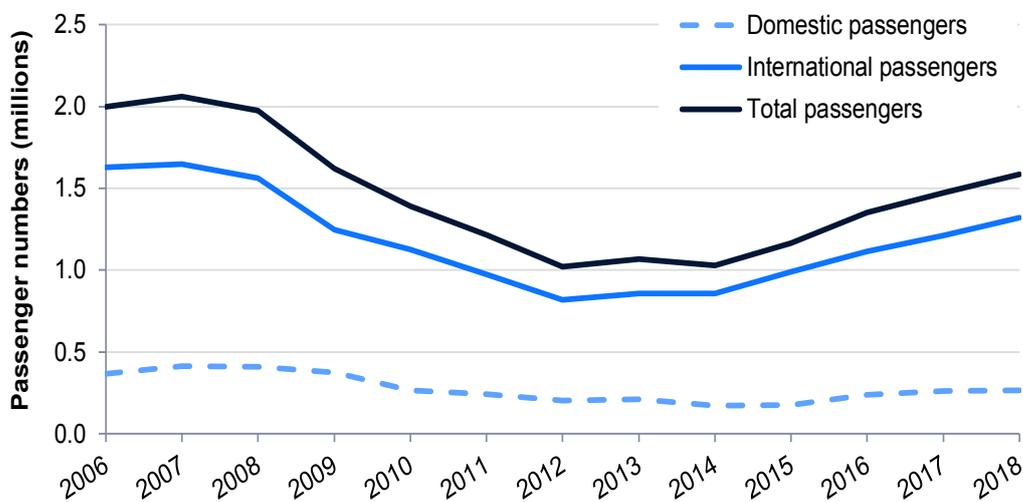
## Air transport in Wales during 2018

### Key points

- The number of passengers using Cardiff International airport increased by 7.7 per cent in 2018, to 1.6 million (Chart 1). This includes both arrivals and departures.



**Chart 1: Terminal passengers at Cardiff airport from 2006 to 2018**



Source: WG analysis of Civil Aviation Authority data

- During 2018 there were 95 international destinations that operated out of Cardiff International airport, 11 more than in 2017.
- Amsterdam was the most popular international destination in 2018 and Edinburgh the most popular domestic destination ([Chart 2](#)).
- There were around 31,000 flights (inbound and outbound combined) at Cardiff International airport in 2018, a 7.4 per cent increase on the 2017 figures ([Chart 11](#)).
- After a period of exceptionally low freight movements, around 1,500 tonnes of freight were moved through Cardiff airport in 2018, compared to just 4 tonnes in the previous year. The increase was driven by a new route to Qatar from May 2018 which transports significant volumes of freight as well as passengers ([Chart 12](#)).

### About this bulletin

This statistical bulletin presents information about Cardiff International airport in 2018, 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 2018, there were 292 million passenger journeys through UK airports with Heathrow the busiest (80.1 million), followed by Gatwick (46.1 million), Manchester (28.3 million) and Stansted (28.0 million). Cardiff was the 19th busiest airport in the UK with 1.6 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 2018 it saw an increase of 7.7 per cent in passengers to 1.6 million, compared with 2017. There was an increase in the number of routes in 2018 with Flybe and Thomson Airways being the largest carriers.

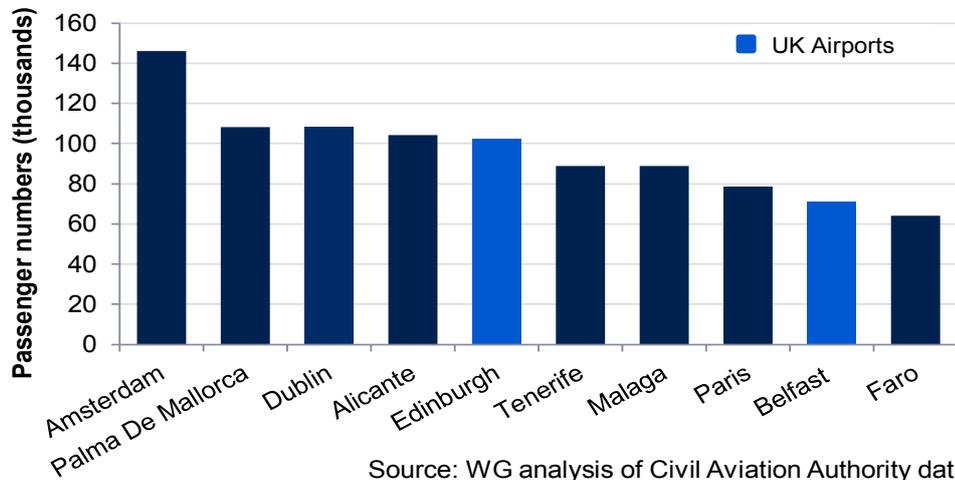
83.3 per cent of passengers flew to international destinations and 16.7 per cent used domestic routes. There was a 9.0 per cent increase in international passengers at Cardiff airport in 2018 and a 1.9 per cent increase in domestic passengers.



There were 265 thousand domestic passengers in 2018 that used Cardiff airport. 99 per cent of them used scheduled flights (regular flights operating according to published timetables) and 1 per cent used chartered flights.

Out of the top ten destinations from Cardiff airport in 2018, only two (Edinburgh and Belfast) were UK destinations. Amsterdam was the most popular international destination and Edinburgh the most popular domestic destination (Chart 2).

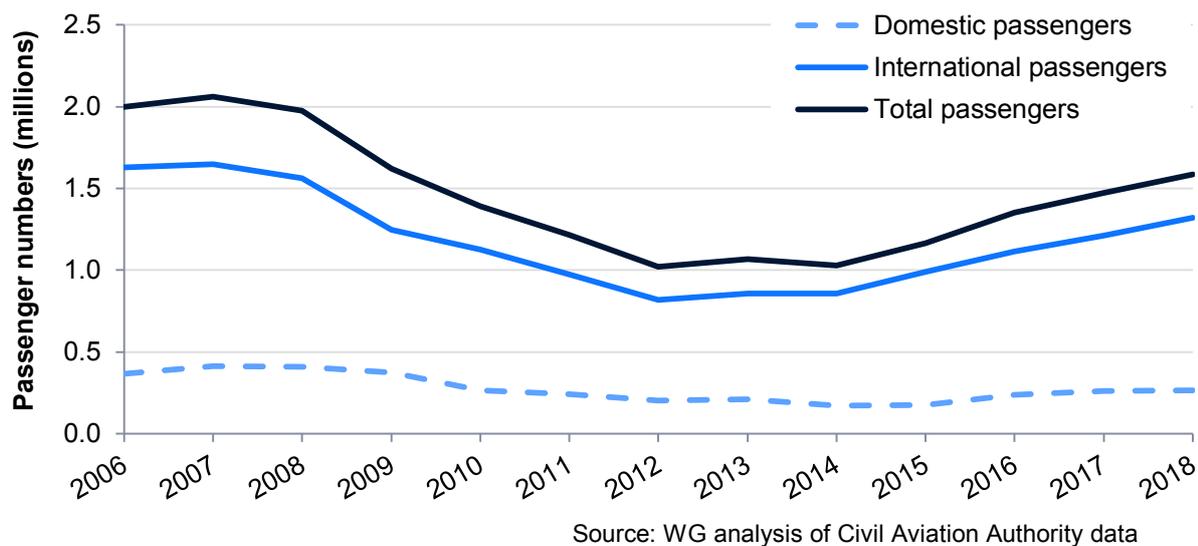
**Chart 2: Most common destinations from Cardiff airport in 2018**



## Long term trends

There was a 50 per cent fall in passengers at Cardiff airport between 2007 and 2012, from 2.1 million to 1.0 million (Chart 1 and Chart 3). This corresponded with the global recession, which resulted in some carriers reducing capacity and others ceasing trading altogether. Passenger numbers have increased by 54 per cent since 2014, but are still some way below the peak of 2007. 2018 saw an increase of 7.7 per cent in passengers compared with 2017. The increase was mainly driven by an increase in international passengers in 2018.

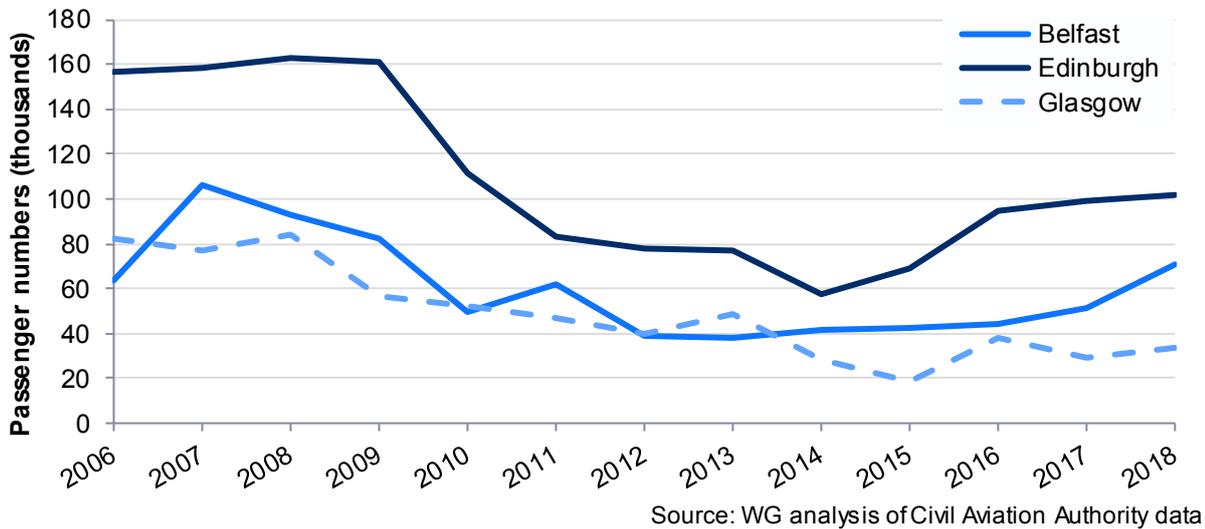
**Chart 3: Passengers at Cardiff airport from 2006 to 2018**



## Domestic routes

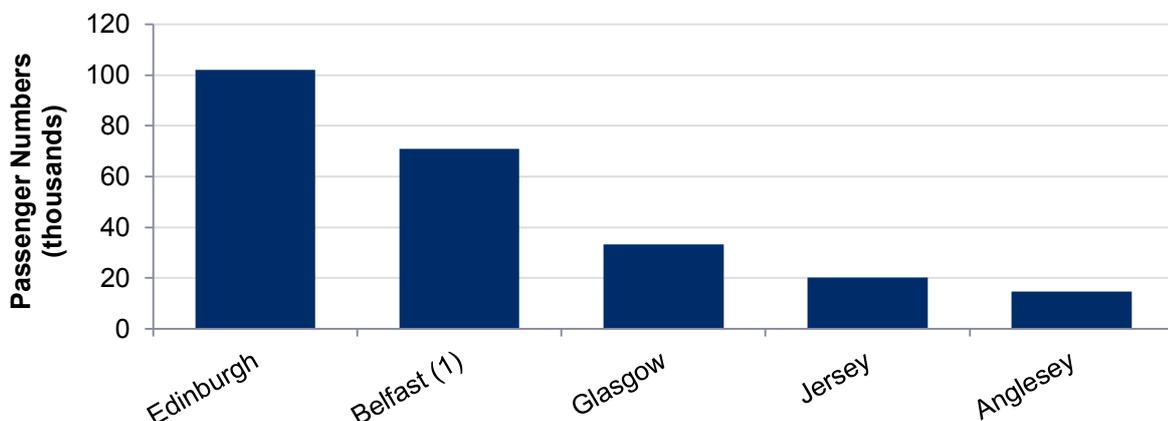
Passenger numbers have increased by 55 per cent since 2014, after falling significantly from 2007. 2018 saw an increase of 1.9 per cent in domestic passengers to 265,000. On the key domestic routes, there were increases in passengers for Belfast (38 per cent), Edinburgh (3 per per cent) and Glasgow (15 per cent) in 2018 (Chart 4).

**Chart 4: Most used domestic routes from Cardiff airport, 2006 to 2018**



- 265,000 passengers travelled to or from other UK airports in 2018. The most common routes were Edinburgh (102,000), Belfast (71,000), Glasgow (33,000), Jersey (20,000) and Anglesey (15,000) (Chart 5).
- In 2018 London moved out of the top 5 most common domestic routes, having been the fourth most common domestic destination in 2017. A route to London City airport was introduced in September 2016, initially to cover a period in which the Severn rail tunnel was closed, and this route ceased in October 2017.
- Of the 5 most used domestic routes in 2018, all routes saw an increase in passenger numbers when compared to 2017.

**Chart 5: The 5 most popular UK destinations from Cardiff airport, 2018**



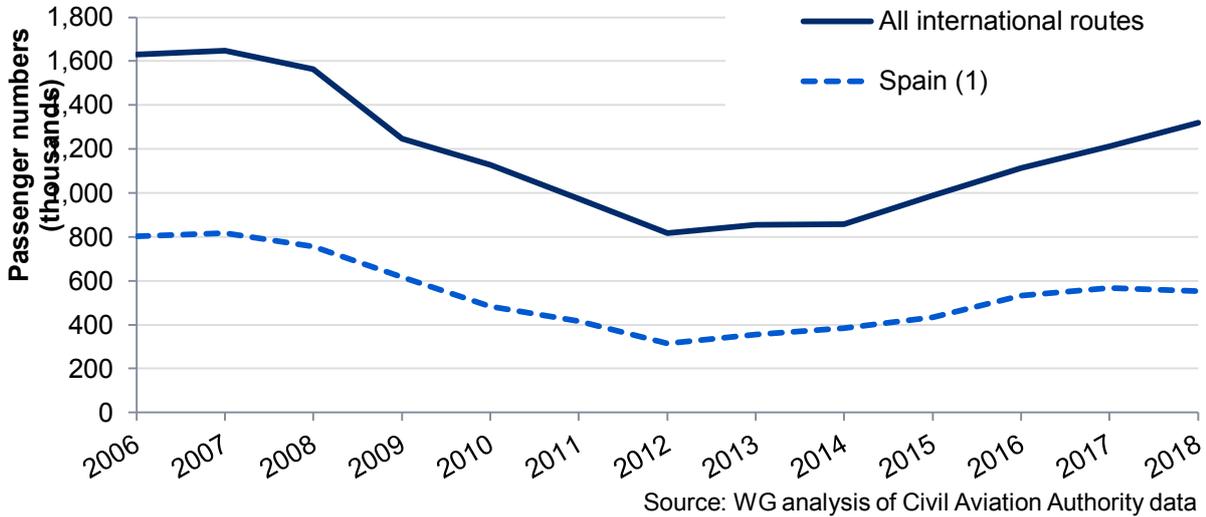
**Notes:**

(1) Includes Belfast City and Belfast International Airport

## International routes

During 2018, 1.3 million passengers travelled between Cardiff airport and overseas destinations. International passenger numbers peaked at 1.6 million in 2007 and subsequently fell to 0.8 million in 2012. Thereafter, there has been a steady increase, with a 9 per cent increase in the latest year. Much of the long term trend in overseas passengers is driven by Spanish routes (Chart 6).

**Chart 6: International travel from Cardiff airport, 2006 to 2018**

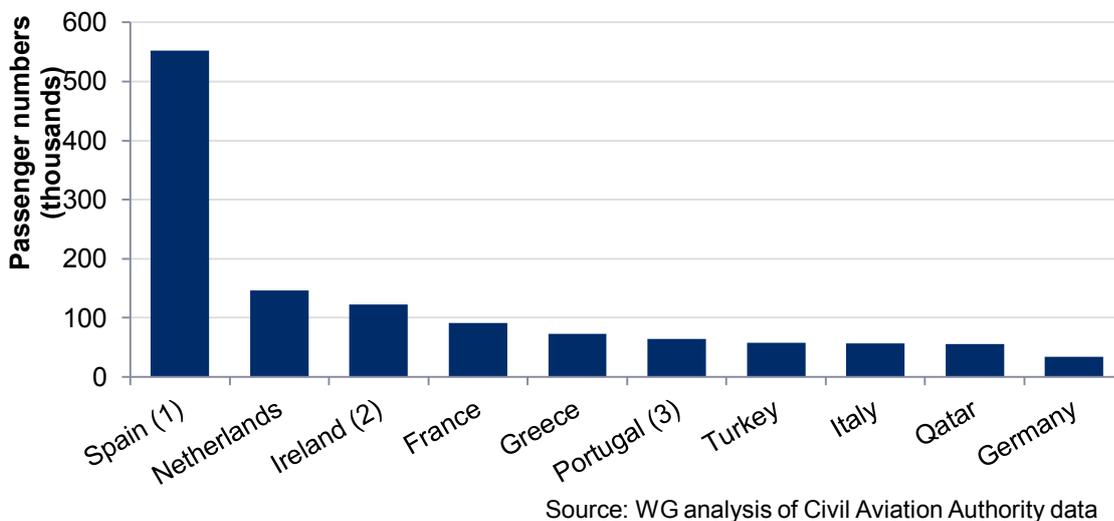


**Notes:**

(1) Includes Canary Islands

- 553,000 passengers travelled to Spain (including Canary Islands) in 2018, a 2.6 per cent decrease from 2017 (Chart 7).
- Passenger numbers for the Netherlands peaked at 226,000 in 2007 and fell by 50 per cent to 2012. In 2018 there was an 8.9 per cent increase to 146,000.
- Passenger numbers to Ireland increased by 80 per cent in 2015 after the introduction of Flybe routes to Dublin and Cork. In 2018 there was a 5.3 per cent increase.

**Chart 7: Most common overseas destinations from Cardiff airport, 2018**



**Notes:**

(1) Includes Canary Islands

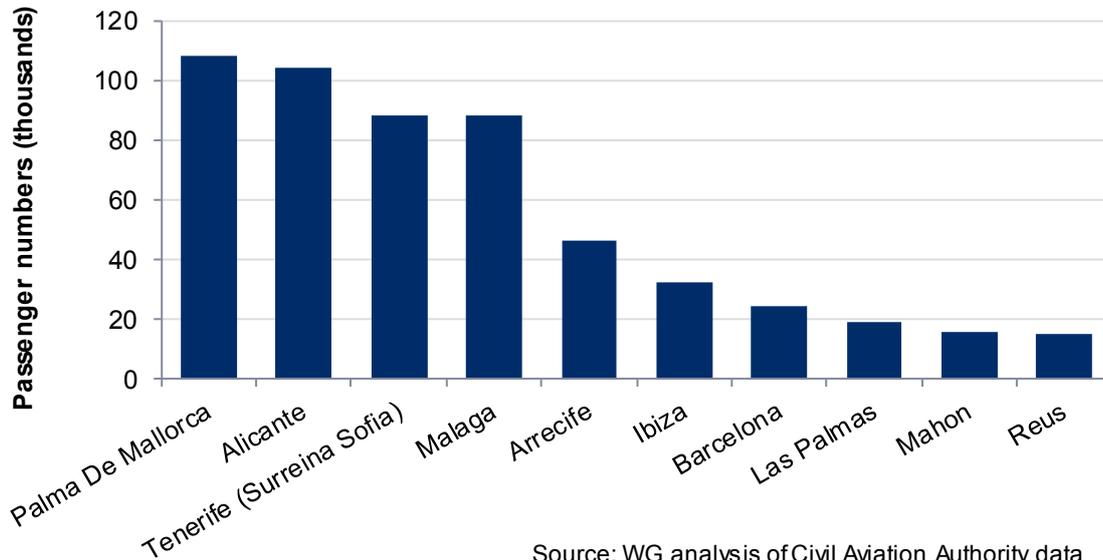
(2) Refers to the Republic of Ireland only

(3) Excludes Madeira

## Spain

Spain was the most common destination country with 553,000 passengers in 2018; of which 155,000 visited the Canary Islands (Chart 8). Spain represents 42 per cent of all international travel through Cardiff airport and 35 per cent of total travel. The key destinations to the Spanish mainland were Palma de Mallorca (108,000), Alicante (104,000) and Malaga (89,000). In the Canary Islands, Tenerife was the most visited destination with 89,000 visitors followed by Arrecife (46,000).

**Chart 8: Main Spanish destinations from Cardiff airport in 2018**

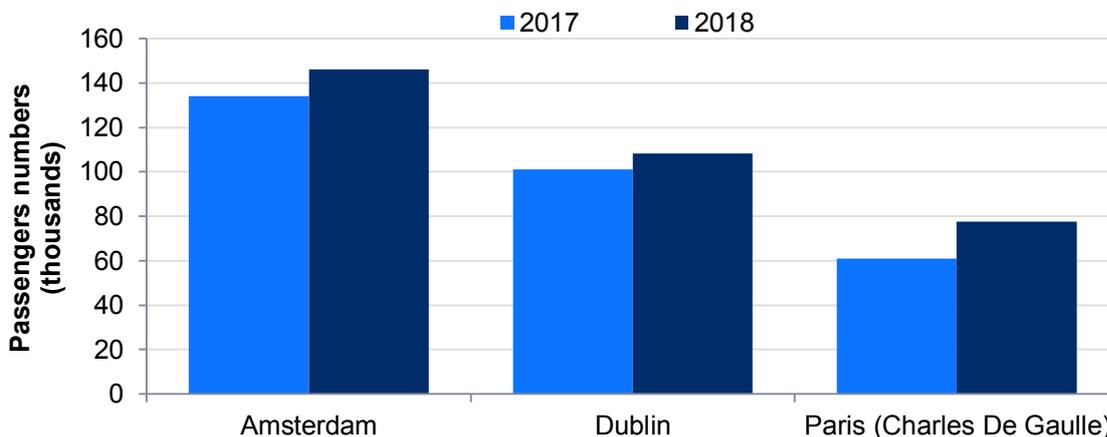


Source: WG analysis of Civil Aviation Authority data

## European hubs – Amsterdam, Dublin and Paris

Key international routes are to Amsterdam in the Netherlands (146,000 passengers), Dublin in the Republic of Ireland (108,000) and Paris Charles de Gaulle airport in France (78,000). These airports make up 25 per cent of all international travel through Cardiff airport (Chart 9) and passenger numbers at these three airports increased in the latest year. Paris, Amsterdam and Dublin are key European hub cities that offer the opportunity for onward connections to a wider range of destinations.

**Chart 9: Main Dutch, Irish (Republic of) and French destinations from Cardiff airport in 2018**

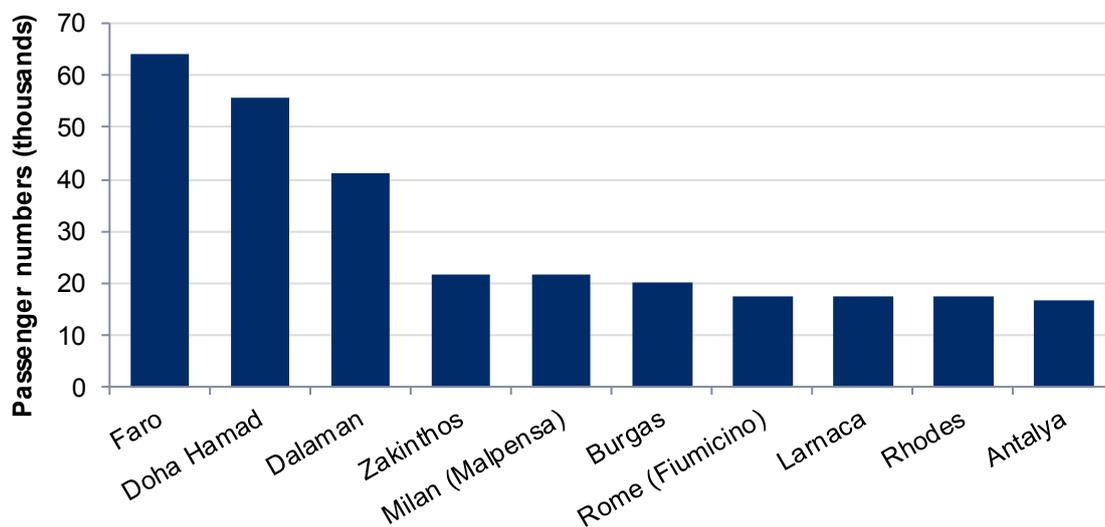


Source: WG analysis of Civil Aviation Authority data

## Other destinations

Faro was the most visited of the other destinations with 64,000 passengers in 2018. There were 73,000 passengers for Greek destinations including Zakinthos (22,000) and Rhodes (17,000). Other common destinations include Doha Hamad, a new route in 2018 (56,000 passengers), the coastal plain of Dalaman in Turkey (41,000) and Milan (21,000) (Chart 10).

**Chart 10: Other most popular destinations from Cardiff airport, 2018**



Source: WG analysis of Civil Aviation Authority data

## Aircraft movements (flights)

An aircraft movement is an aircraft taking off or landing at an airport.

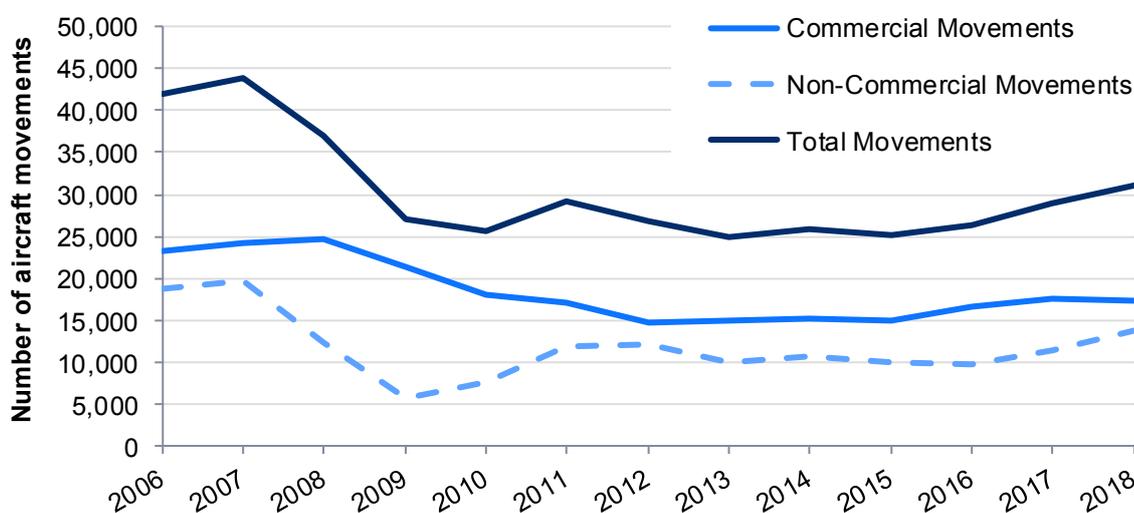
Commercial flights involve aircraft engaged in the transport of passengers or cargo on commercial terms, as well as positioning flights and local movements.

Non-commercial flights cover all other types of flight, including private and Aero Club flights.



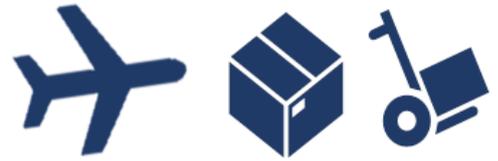
In 2018, there were 31,000 aircraft movements at Cardiff International airport, an increase of 7.4 per cent compared with 2017 (Chart 11). The number of movements fell from a peak of 44,000 in 2007 to 25,000 in 2013, and there have been increases in each of the last three years.

**Chart 11: Number of aircraft movements at Cardiff Airport from 2006 to 2018**



Source: WG analysis of Civil Aviation Authority data

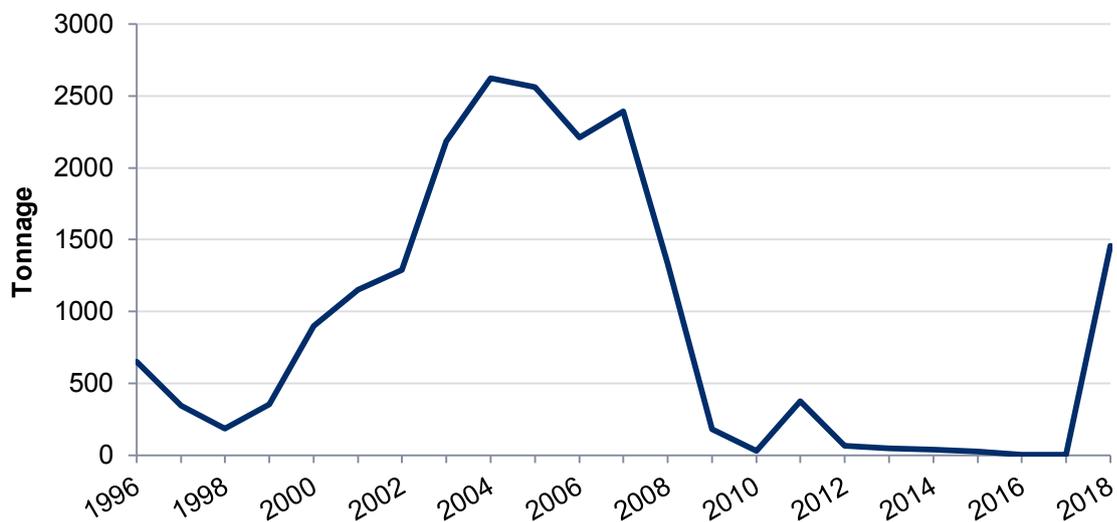
## Air freight



Historically, the volume of freight moving through Cardiff airport has been volatile (Chart 12). 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 remained at low levels and in 2017 just 4 tonnes of freight were moved through the airport, the lowest figure on record. In 2018 freight levels increased to 1,500 tonnes, driven primarily by the introduction of the Qatar route in May 2018, which transports significant volumes of cargo as well as passengers.

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. Items commonly transported by air include electronics, telecoms, vehicles and auto parts, and biotech and health products.

**Chart 12: Freight at Cardiff airport, 1996 to 2018**



Source: WG analysis of Civil Aviation Authority data

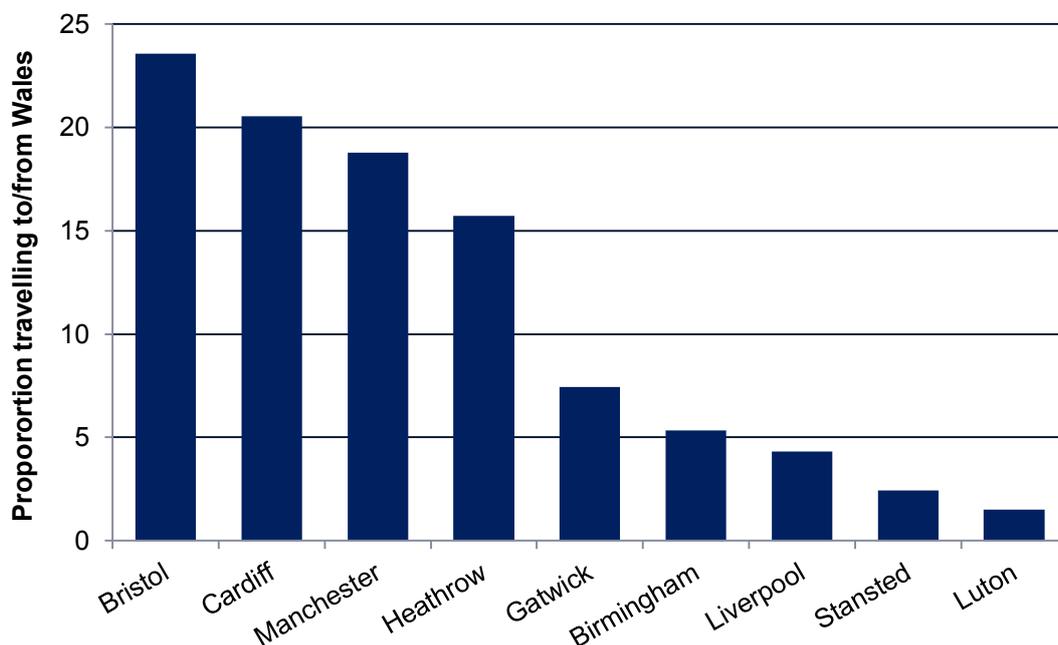
## Air passenger survey

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, and the next survey is expected to be conducted in 2019. Further analysis of the 2015 air passenger survey can be found in our [Air transport 2017](#) release, and includes information on the number of passengers that selected Wales as their point of origin or destination and the proportion of passengers at Cardiff airport used public transport to get to/from the airport. This data will be added to our StatsWales website in due course.

### Which airports are used by people in Wales (based on the 2015 survey results)?

Of the surveyed airports, 21 per cent of air passengers travelling to or from Wales in 2015 used Cardiff airport. However, Bristol was proportionately the most used airport, with 24 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 13: 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

## 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](#)", 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 on their website, 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: <https://gov.wales/air-transport>

## **Next update**

May 2020

## **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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