

UK Travel Disruption: Strong Winds Cause Havoc Ahead of Christmas

Severe weather conditions across the UK are causing widespread travel disruption ahead of the festive season as millions of travellers get ready to hit the road.

Flight cancellations, ferry suspensions and serious rail delays mean many travellers have had to reorganise their plans as strong winds continue.



Picture credits: BBC

Flights Grounded at Heathrow

Strong winds and air traffic restrictions have caused around 100 cancellations at Heathrow Airport on Sunday. The airlines are asking passengers to check with them before they go to the airport.

Travel expert Simon Calder described the scale of the disruption, saying such a large number of cancellations is rare for a normal Sunday. About 15,000 passengers may have been affected by 80 British Airways flights, accounting for 80 of the affected flights.

Short haul passengers unwilling to travel over the weekend can have their free flights changed, while those whose journeys are disrupted can rebook or be refunded.

A Heathrow spokesperson insisted passenger safety is the top priority, and the cancellations were caused by adverse weather and air traffic restrictions. The UK's air traffic control service, NATS, has confirmed temporary restrictions are in place to cope with the situation safely.

Make sure to check **airport parking deals** during the holiday season and book according to your needs.

Ferry Services Suspended

Ferry operations have been wrecked by the high winds, with major routes across the Irish Sea and Scottish coast at a standstill.

Services between Larne and Cairnryan were canceled until at least Sunday evening by P&O Ferries, while NorthLink Ferries and CalMac have axed or changed many of their routes.

Disruptions continue across a number of channels and passengers are being warned by StenaLine and DFDS to check their schedules before travelling.

Trains Delayed, Roads Strained



Rains and storms in Liverpool. Picture credits: BBC

Other rail services are also delayed and cancelled. Some routes had speed restrictions imposed by ScotRail, which resulted in timetable changes and delays which continued until late evening. Earlier weather-related stoppages caused disruption between Exeter St Davids and Okehampton, Great Western Railway said.

The Humber Bridge is closed to high sided vehicles, and strong winds are making driving conditions hazardous. This weekend should be the busiest for travel of the year, according to the RAC, with 22.7 million drivers expected on the road on Saturday and 21.3 million on Sunday.

We are asking people to be patient and to be patient in the sense of travelling with an extra bit of time because of the weather conditions,' spokesman Rod Dennis said.

Always book meet and greet parking at Stansted if you want to enjoy a luxurious start to your trip.

Weather Warnings in Effect

Yellow weather warnings for wind remain active across Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, and northern and western England until 21:00 GMT Sunday.

Gusts up to 82 mph were recorded at South Uist in the Western Isles on Saturday, while other exposed areas are expected to see winds of up to 50-70mph.

A yellow warning for ice will come into effect later on Sunday in northeast Scotland, lasting until Monday morning.

Disruption adds to Engineering Works

On top of that, planned engineering works are leading to closures on key rail routes. The £29m worth of upgrades will see a section of the Midland Main Line between London St Pancras and Bedford closed until December 29. Cambridge, Crewe and other stations around London Paddington and Liverpool Street are also affected.

The reason for doing the works during the festive period is that passenger numbers are down, said Robert Nisbet, director of nations and regions at the Rail Delivery Group. The upgrades, he said, are designed to increase long term service reliability.

Quieter Weather Ahead

Yet relief is coming. Nikki Berry of BBC Weather said winds will ease by Sunday evening and for the run up to Christmas, there will be calmer and milder conditions. They expect temperatures to rise, leaving all regions in double digits Celsius by Christmas Eve.

Advice for Travelers

Authorities are asking travelers to plan ahead, check for updates and to allow extra time for their journey. While the disruptions are inevitable, staying up to date and ready can help make traveling during the festive rush a little easier.



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