UK AIRWAYS HAVE SEEN THE STRONGEST START TO A YEAR SINCE 2008

UK airports have seen the strongest start to a year since 2008 – with first quarter passenger numbers now close to levels which were last seen during the pre-recession years.

Between January and March 2015, UK* terminals handled 50.2m passengers, making this year’s Q1 the busiest since the same period in 2008, just prior to the global financial crisis, which accounted for 51.4m passengers.

The first three months of 2015 also recorded the largest growth in passenger numbers (7.5%) of any quarter in the last ten years**. Figures show this increase was primarily the result of growth in European traffic (9%) and domestic traffic (7%).

Commercial flights*** for Q1 2015 have also increased (471,000) showing the strongest growth (2.9%) of any quarter for nine years, since Q1 2006.

These strong growth figures are revealed in the CAA’s latest quarterly Aviation Trends report, which provides detailed analysis of the UK aviation industry.

Rolling 12 months
The strong start to the year has also helped UK airports record the best rolling twelve month passenger number total since records began.

In the last four quarters**** Q2 2014 to Q1 2015 (April 2014 to March 2015) 243.9m passengers departed and arrived at all reporting UK airports. This surpasses the previous rolling 12 month peak of 243.3m passengers, between Q2 2007 and Q1 2008 (April 2007 to March 2008).

These numbers also mean passenger demand across a twelve month period has, for the first time, surpassed the levels last witnessed before the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent UK recession.

In this same 12 month period the number of passenger flights across UK airports has increased by 1.3%. In this period London airports showed a 3.6% rise to 1.02m, though regional airports recorded a dip of 1.1% to 977,000.

Tim Johnson, CAA Policy Director, said: ‘The large increase in first quarter passenger numbers has led to UK airports recording their busiest ever twelve months and means that for the first time air travel has exceeded the levels last
seen before the 2008 financial crisis. Figures also show commercial flight numbers are growing much faster at London airports than elsewhere which highlights the pressures both on runway capacity and airspace in the South East. The increasing levels of air travel highlights the importance of addressing these two issues. Without changes both to infrastructure on the ground and in the air, consumers will face higher charges, less choice and more disruption.’

**Punctuality**
On-time performance of scheduled passenger flights in Q1 2015 at all UK airports fell or remained unchanged when compared with Q1 2014. London airports dropped from 84% in Q1 2014 to 80% in Q1 2015. Regional airports dropped from 86% to 81%. Overall on-time performance at all UK airports dropped from 85% to 80%. Average delay of scheduled passenger flights in Q1 2015 increased at all airports with the exception of Jersey and Bournemouth, which saw average delay fall by two minutes and one minute respectively against Q1 2014. Average delay at all London airports increased by two minutes from 10 to 12 minutes. Regional airports increased from nine minutes to 11 minutes. For all UK airports average delay increased by two minutes from nine minutes to 11 minutes in Q1 2014/2015.

**Aviation trends**
The latest passenger number and punctuality figures are contained in the CAA’s Aviation Trends documents, which is produced quarterly, and includes detailed analysis of both London and regional airports. The document also contains information relating to air cargo tonnes carried to and from UK airports. See [www.caa.co.uk/aviationtrends](http://www.caa.co.uk/aviationtrends).

* UK airports, includes those on the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

** This is with exception of Q2 2011. This quarter followed Iceland’s volcanic eruption in April and May 2010, which severely affected air traffic/passenger travel in Q2 2010.

*** Commercial flights includes air traffic to and from UK oil rigs.

**** Last four published quarters. These are Q2 (April to June) 2014 to Q1 (Jan to March) 2015.

For a list of all statistics available on the CAA website, see [www.caa.co.uk/statistics](http://www.caa.co.uk/statistics)
About the CAA
The CAA is the UK’s specialist aviation regulator. Its activities include: making sure that the aviation industry meets the highest technical and operational safety standards; preventing holidaymakers from being stranded abroad or losing money because of tour operator insolvency; planning and regulating all UK airspace; and regulating airports, air traffic services and airlines and providing advice on aviation policy from an economic standpoint.