

'Understaffed, tired and shabby': UK's worst airport revealed

Belfast International has been rated the worst airport in Which?'s annual airport survey.

The logo for 'Which?' is displayed in a large, bold, white font against a solid red background. The word 'Which?' is written in a sans-serif typeface, with the question mark being a large, stylized black character.

Passengers reported being frustrated by problems including long queues, crowded terminals and pricey parking charges at Northern Ireland's busiest airport.

As a result, it achieved an overall customer score of 42%.

Belfast International was described as 'understaffed', 'tired and shabby', with a 'poor layout'.

The airport also scored poorly for security queues, seating and staff as well as a limited range of shops and restaurants - a quarter of which are branches of WH Smith.

Luton, which recently completed major improvement works, was again at the bottom of the large airport table, where it has been for the fourth year running. It achieved a satisfaction score of 43%.

Manchester T3 (47%) and Aberdeen (50%) also performed poorly in the survey of more than 6,000 airport experiences.

Despite terminal improvement works finishing in December, Luton travellers complained of 'limited seating' and 'congested' security queues.

The refurbishment does not appear to have fixed the airport's problems, with one passenger noting that the airport seemed to have 'taken all the bad ideas from other airports and incorporated them here'.

When Which? asked if there was an airport they would never fly from, 25% picked Luton.

Meanwhile, Aberdeen achieved the lowest rating (50%) out of the airports in Scotland with two stars in most categories, including staff. The lowest rating for this airport was for lack of seating, which received only one star.

Doncaster Sheffield is the highest-rated airport in the country for the third year running, with a customer score of 86%.

Customers described the Yorkshire hub as a 'cosy airport' with no queues that was 'easy to navigate', with the biggest gripe among customers that it was not connected to more destinations than its current 55.

Most impressively, 97% of those who have used the airport in the last 12 months said they would recommend Doncaster Sheffield, praising its 'personable and helpful' staff.

Among the airports with more than 10 million passengers a year, Heathrow Terminal 5 has the best overall customer score (66%). Ample seating and helpful staff both earned the airport four out of five stars but it was the quality of the toilet facilities which got the full five-star rating.

Travellers noted however that 'too many half-empty luxury shops' made the terminal feel too much like 'a shopping mall', while car parking was described as 'daylight robbery'.

Described as 'hassle-free', Birmingham earned a 65% customer score and three stars across all categories, although some travellers described it as 'unremarkable' and 'functional'.