



Department  
for Transport

# Situation Report 1

## Gatwick Airport Disruption: Drones

### SITREP DETAILS

<b>Date</b>	20/12/2018
<b>Time</b>	10:30 [Information Cut Off: 10:00]
<b>Contact</b>	Transport Security Operations Centre (TSOC) [REDACTED]

### HEADLINE SUMMARY

- On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at approx. 21:00 there were multiple sightings of drones in the area of Gatwick airport.
- The runways have been closed for the majority of the night. The runway tried to open again at around 03:00 but further sightings caused it to close again. Gatwick attempted to re-open at 09:00 however further sightings were reported, so this attempted failed. There is currently no indication of potential opening time.
- This has caused widespread disruption with many flights being cancelled or diverted to other airports.
- This incident is being regarded by industry as malicious attempt to disrupt operations.
- Media lines have been issued.
- Ministers are aware and Baroness Sugg has been doing the media rounds this morning.
- The impact as of last night equates to roughly 6000 passengers divert, 2,000 unable to travel (outbound). We expect this to have substantially increased and will continue to increase throughout the day.
- [REDACTED]

### AVIATION IMPACTS

- During the period of runway closure, 18 scheduled aircraft were unable to depart Gatwick, carrying around 2,000 passengers.
- Of the 71 scheduled arrivals during that period, 52 were diverted to airports across the UK, with a handful of planes diverted to airports in northern Europe. This resulted in around 6,000 passengers being displaced and 2,000 unable to depart for Gatwick. The other nineteen were held at their airport of origin.
- Aircraft are being diverted to the following airports:
  - London Heathrow
  - London Luton

- London Stansted
  - London Southend
  - Manchester
  - Bristol Airport
  - Liverpool John Lennon Airport
  - Paris Charles De Gaulle
  - Paris Orly
  - Shannon Airport
  - Amsterdam Schiphol Airport
- Further drone sightings continue to occur this morning (20<sup>th</sup> December 2018) - and the runway remains closed with no flights arriving or departing so far today.
  - The number of flights scheduled today is 760. The number of passengers effected are: departing - 65,592, arriving - 49,472.

#### INDUSTRY RESPONSE

- CAA has stood up an incident response. [REDACTED]
- BA and Easyjet are working to provide displaced passengers with hotel accommodation or transport back to Gatwick.
- Gatwick staff have passenger welfare arrangements in place at all terminals.
- Other airports receiving diverted aircraft are making passenger welfare arrangements.

#### OTHER MODE IMPACTS

##### Rail:

- No current impacts, however Gatwick express are advising passengers of the disruption at Gatwick via social media. Gatwick Express are advising anyone scheduled to fly from Gatwick Airport not to travel to the airport without checking the status of your flight with your airline.

#### OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

- DfT are liaising with Home Office OSCT and FCO.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- DfT have answered an urgent PNQ regarding whether HMG will make a statement on the disruption at Gatwick Airport caused by the drone activity.

#### MEDIA AND COMMS

- The disruption at Gatwick is the top story on broadcast bulletins this morning, and is running prominently across online and social media too. Media are focusing on the fact the drone is still in the area, and the extensive disruption to passengers who are either unable to fly or who have been diverted to other airports across the UK.
- DfT have also issued a statement from Baroness Sugg, and the minister did a

media round this morning with 5 Live, BBC Breakfast, Sky and ITN in which she spoke about her sympathy for passengers and the fact that Gatwick were working hard to reopen the runway. She was also asked about counter-drone technology and options for bringing the drone down.

- [REDACTED]
- DfT comms is in close contact with Gatwick – who have been giving broadcast interviews throughout the morning, CAA and Sussex Police to ensure comms lines and handling are shared as the situation evolves.

**Aviation Minister Baroness Sugg said:** “These drones have been flown illegally and the operators, who have acted incredibly irresponsibly, could face up to five years in jail.

“We are in close contact with Gatwick Airport as they work with police to safely resolve the situation as quickly as possible.”

#### Background

- In May, the Government amended the Air Navigation Order 2016 to make it illegal to fly drones above 400 feet and within one kilometre of an airport boundary. This came into effect in July.
- We urge all passengers to check with the airport for the latest information on their flight.
- It is against the law to fly a drone above 400ft or within 1km of an airport boundary
- These drones have been flown recklessly and negligently endangered aircraft, if the operators are found to have committed a criminal offence they could face up to five years in prison.
- The Government plan to publish a response to its drone consultation the New Year including possible frameworks for the testing and use of counter-drone technology that could be used to protect sensitive national infrastructure from possible malicious drone incursions

Passengers should check with the airport before travelling, more information can be found at: <https://www.gatwickairport.com/flights/flight-disruption/>

#### BATTLE RHYTHM

20<sup>th</sup> December 2018:

- [REDACTED]