

British Airways owner IAG boosts profits despite Heathrow chaos

British Airways owner [IAG](#) marked a return to profitability in the third quarter despite complaints of passenger turmoil at [Heathrow airport](#).

IAG said: “Capacity operated out of London Heathrow airport was lower than originally planned” and that it was “managing the impact on British Airways’ customers and operations of the decision by Heathrow airport to cap passenger numbers.”

Earlier this week, [Heathrow warned a further 13,000 staff need to be hired](#) at the airport if it is to have any chance of coping with expected levels of [passengers](#) on its busiest days.

It said the 400 businesses that use Heathrow face a “huge logistical challenge” to find the numbers of staff such as baggage handlers they need after pandemic travel restrictions were lifted.

The airport said it is working with airlines about a new “highly targeted” passenger cap to prevent fresh chaos at the airport on peak days in the run-up to Christmas.

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A last-minute decision by Heathrow this summer to severely curtail passenger numbers sparked fury among airlines with [BA](#) rival Emirates bemoaning that Heathrow “gave us 36 hours to comply with capacity cuts, of a figure that appears to be plucked from thin air. This is entirely unreasonable and unacceptable, and we reject these demands.”

[Profits](#) at IAG topped €1.2 billion (£1 billion) in the three months to September amid a return to overseas travel. Revenues stood at €7.3 billion, around 1% higher than 2019 despite continued travel restrictions in Asia and a 25% drop in passengers at Heathrow airport. IAG shares fell 1% to 118p.

IAG chief executive Luis Gallego said: “All our airlines were significantly profitable and we are continuing to see strong passenger demand, while capacity and load factors recover. Leisure demand is particularly healthy and leisure revenue has recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Business travel continues to recover steadily [but] we are conscious of the uncertainties in the economic outlook and the ongoing pressures on households.”