

Passengers stranded as staff COVID cases force easyJet to cancel hundreds of flights

More than 200 flights were cancelled by easyJet over the weekend, with dozens more grounded on Monday, leaving some passengers stranded amid resurgent coronavirus-related disruption for travellers.

The budget airline blamed the cancellations on staff shortages caused by COVID-19.

It said it had made efforts to combat the shortages by “rostering” standby crew over the weekend but was forced to make “additional cancellations”.

More than 60 flights cancelled on Monday

Sixty-two flights have been pulled on Monday.

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An easyJet spokesperson said: “As a result of the current high rates of COVID infections across Europe, like all businesses easyJet is experiencing higher than usual levels of employee sickness.

[@easyJet](#) [#easyJet](#) not difficult to understand your staff have covid with your non mask mandate on flights.

– Dean Swift (@shearer991) [April 4, 2022](#)

“We have taken action to mitigate this through the rostering of additional standby crew this weekend, however, with the current levels of sickness, we have also decided to make some cancellations in advance which were focused on consolidating flights where we have multiple frequencies so customers have

more options to rebook their travel, often on the same day.

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“Unfortunately it has been necessary to make some additional

cancellations for today (Sunday) and tomorrow (Monday). We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause to customers on affected flights.”

The cancellations come after travel chaos hit some of Britain’s biggest airports at the weekend, with passengers at Heathrow and Manchester airports stuck in long queues waiting to check in.

British Airways also understood to have cancelled a small number of flights because of staff sickness – on top of 115 others from Heathrow that were pre-planned as it continues to battle a series of pandemic-related challenges including IT woes and staff shortages.

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AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould said: “These issues stem from airlines and airports having insufficient staff to cope with rising demand. A resurgence in COVID cases hasn’t helped, with many workers off sick.”

He added: “If the current disruption continues into the Easter weekend, we could easily see airlines like easyJet have to downgrade their earnings forecasts.

“Making matters worse is the fact that oil prices remain stubbornly high which is putting pressure on fuel costs. Ryanair is clearly concerned about the situation given how it has announced increased fuel hedging.

“The soaring price of fuel could weigh on corporate earnings in the airline sector unless extra costs are passed on to the customer.”

‘Cancellation with less than 10 hours’ notice’

Some easyJet passengers said they were stranded abroad with no

explanation or alternatives offered by the airline.

Simon Rudkins, 50, said he was due to return to the UK from a ski trip in the Alps with his family when the airline contacted him with less than 10 hours' notice saying their flight was cancelled.

He said that his 85-year-old mother, who has dementia, had joined them for the journey back.

"She gets very confused and she doesn't need stress," Mr Rudkins said.

The freelance landscape gardener said he has had to call customers who were expecting him on Monday to explain the delay and will lose out on money for the jobs.

"We called easyJet asking for alternatives. We basically got told 'no, there's nothing, no flights at all. The best you can do is fly tomorrow'. I probably wouldn't go near easyJet (again)."