

What are my rights if BA strikes hit during the summer holidays?

The prospect of strikes affecting BA services at Heathrow this summer are another headache for a struggling airline and also passengers who were, likely, already nervous about getting away after disruption at airports across Europe.

Here, Sky News explains your rights as a consumer [in the event British Airways is hit by strikes](#) involving hundreds of check-in and ground-handling staff and explores why the airline – and others – are already cutting flights.

Why is the air travel industry suffering so many problems?

The issues can be traced back to early 2020 when airlines began cutting flights as Europe started to be gripped by the pandemic.

Put simply, so many people left the industry or took redundancy that flight operators and airports are short of staff.

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In the case of BA, it axed more than 10,000 jobs at the height of the crisis and is trying to get back to full operational strength but it, along with some rivals, has struggled to recruit quickly.

Those efforts have been hampered, airlines say, by the resulting strain placed on the security clearance process.

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BA has also endured a few own goals such as [IT failures](#) earlier this year that have led to the cancellation of hundreds of flights.

What are they doing about it?

BA and others have been cutting flights for months – often on those routes which have frequent daily services – in a bid to prevent last-minute cancellations.

To give passengers greater confidence, the government this

week said airlines would be free to cancel peak summer services in advance without the risk of losing landing slots.

The aim is that by removing the risk of penalty for failing to meet their obligations, airlines can adjust schedules for July and August now to stabilise their operations and minimise the risk of disruption nearer the time.

So what is the chance of my BA flight from Heathrow being cancelled?

No strike dates have been announced – yet.

The unions want to give the airline some time to improve its pay offer to their members but any strike should not deal a killer blow to all BA services from Heathrow.

That is because, it is understood, fewer than 50% of the airline's customer-facing staff are involved in the dispute.

If my flight IS cancelled, what then?

British Airways should, on paper, have plenty of time to cancel any flights it needs to in advance of any strike because the unions have to give two weeks' notice of strike dates.

In the event of a cancellation, BA can offer you an alternative but, crucially, is obliged to book you onto a rival's service if spare capacity is available.

Otherwise, customers affected have the option of securing a refund.

The consumer group Which? said BA would be liable for compensation too if it had to cancel services at short notice.

Its travel editor, Rory Boland, explained: "Strikes by airline staff are within the airline's control because it is negotiating with its staff, so if your flight is delayed or

cancelled because of this then you'll likely be entitled to compensation under Denied Boarding Regulations.

"BA must also reroute customers as soon as possible using other carriers if necessary, and explain these rights to customers.

"We know this requirement is not always being met, so the government and Civil Aviation Authority must intervene where airlines are playing fast and loose with the rules."