# British Airways baggage system failure causes chaos across UK airports on Sunday



British Airways passengers experienced significant disruption on Sunday as technical problems with the airline’s baggage systems led to delayed check-ins, lost luggage, and extended queues at major UK airports including Gatwick and Heathrow. The airline confirmed that a global IT issue with the Baggage Source Message system, provided by aviation communications firm Sita, affected multiple airports from the early hours of the morning and was beyond their control. This disruption impacted not only British Airways but other airlines as well.

At London Gatwick, passengers faced severe delays from the outset, with reports of queues stretching back through corridors as travellers waited for more than 90 minutes to check in. Passengers flying business class or holding Gold and Silver BA Club membership were given priority, but many others were left stranded in long lines. One passenger travelling to Madeira recounted being pulled from the queue at the last minute but arriving at the destination with only one of two checked bags. His second suitcase was only delivered late the following night, highlighting how the issue continued to affect passengers long after initial flights had departed.

Meanwhile, at Heathrow’s Terminal 5, a similar scenario unfolded. Travellers were able to print luggage tags but were then instructed to leave their tagged bags in cordoned areas for sorting by automated systems, which had been disrupted. A travel writer at The Independent witnessed the chaos firsthand, reporting huge queues and hearing from pilots that while most luggage had boarded flights on time, dozens of bags were still delayed and had to be sent on subsequent flights. In one instance, a flight to Nice was delayed by storms and further hampered by the technical glitch, leading to a diversion to Birmingham and subsequent passenger transfers by bus to Heathrow to comply with noise curfews.

British Airways issued apologies and worked to reunite passengers with their belongings, bringing in additional teams to manage the backlog. However, this was compounded by a broader context of ongoing operational challenges for the airline. In recent months, the carrier has faced repeated IT issues, flight cancellations, and staff shortages that have disrupted travel plans for tens of thousands of passengers. For instance, earlier in the year, a strike by Heathrow security staff over pay resulted in extensive flight cancellations, exacerbating passengers' frustrations.

The latest disruption highlights the airline’s vulnerability to technical faults in a climate where travel demand remains high and operational efficiency is critical. While British Airways attributed the primary cause of the Sunday delays to an external IT system failure, the resulting impact underscored the challenges the airline faces in swiftly managing crises and maintaining smooth passenger experiences amid compounding factors like adverse weather.

As of Monday night, the affected passengers whose baggage had been delayed reported being reunited with their luggage, though for many the travel experience was significantly marred by the initial chaos. British Airways has emphasised ongoing efforts to resolve these technical issues and improve communication with travellers, reassuring customers that steps are being taken to mitigate future incidents.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/british-airways-baggage-gatwick-heathrow-b2775739.html), [[2]](https://www.the-independent.com/travel/news-and-advice/british-airways-ba-flights-delays-cancellations-heathrow-gatwick-apology-a7227776.html), [[3]](https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/uk-news/2023/05/25/british-airways-cancels-dozens-of-flights-at-heathrow-and-gatwick/), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/chaos-at-heathrow-as-baggage-delays-described-as-disgraceful-and-a-shambles-by-british-airways-passengers-13158980)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/british-airways-baggage-gatwick-heathrow-b2775739.html), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpqjl3yp77do)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/british-airways-baggage-gatwick-heathrow-b2775739.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-65719766), [[5]](https://www.euronews.com/travel/2023/03/28/british-airways-american-airlines-finnair-the-easter-flights-that-could-be-hit-by-heathrow)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/british-airways-baggage-gatwick-heathrow-b2775739.html), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-65719766)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/british-airways-baggage-gatwick-heathrow-b2775739.html), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/chaos-at-heathrow-as-baggage-delays-described-as-disgraceful-and-a-shambles-by-british-airways-passengers-13158980)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/british-airways-baggage-gatwick-heathrow-b2775739.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.the-independent.com/travel/news-and-advice/british-airways-ba-flights-delays-cancellations-heathrow-gatwick-apology-a7227776.html> - British Airways passengers experienced significant delays due to computer system issues, leading to long queues and manual check-in processes at airports worldwide, particularly in North America. The airline acknowledged the problem and worked to resolve it, apologising for the inconvenience caused to travellers.
3. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/uk-news/2023/05/25/british-airways-cancels-dozens-of-flights-at-heathrow-and-gatwick/> - British Airways cancelled numerous flights at Heathrow and Gatwick airports due to computer problems, disrupting the plans of thousands of travellers. The airline faced challenges in managing the cancellations and rebooking passengers, leading to widespread travel disruptions.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-65719766> - British Airways faced a second day of disruption at Heathrow after IT problems led to the cancellation of dozens more short-haul flights. The technical issue resulted in staff being in the wrong locations, affecting over 20,000 passengers and causing significant travel disruptions.
5. <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2023/03/28/british-airways-american-airlines-finnair-the-easter-flights-that-could-be-hit-by-heathrow> - Security guards at Heathrow Airport initiated a ten-day strike over pay, leading to the cancellation of over 70 British Airways flights on the first day. The strike action resulted in severe delays and disruptions for passengers during the Easter holidays.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/chaos-at-heathrow-as-baggage-delays-described-as-disgraceful-and-a-shambles-by-british-airways-passengers-13158980> - British Airways passengers faced major disruptions when a technical fault led to lost luggage and significant delays at Heathrow Airport. The airline brought in extra teams to reunite passengers with their baggage and apologised for the inconvenience caused.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpqjl3yp77do> - Passengers at Gatwick Airport experienced long waits to collect their luggage due to delays caused by the late arrival of several flights. British Airways apologised for the inconvenience and worked to resolve the issue, which affected multiple airlines.