

# AIRPORTS IN THE COMMUNITY

THE STORY OF HOW UK AIRPORTS HELP THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES



## Airports: Essential for the local community

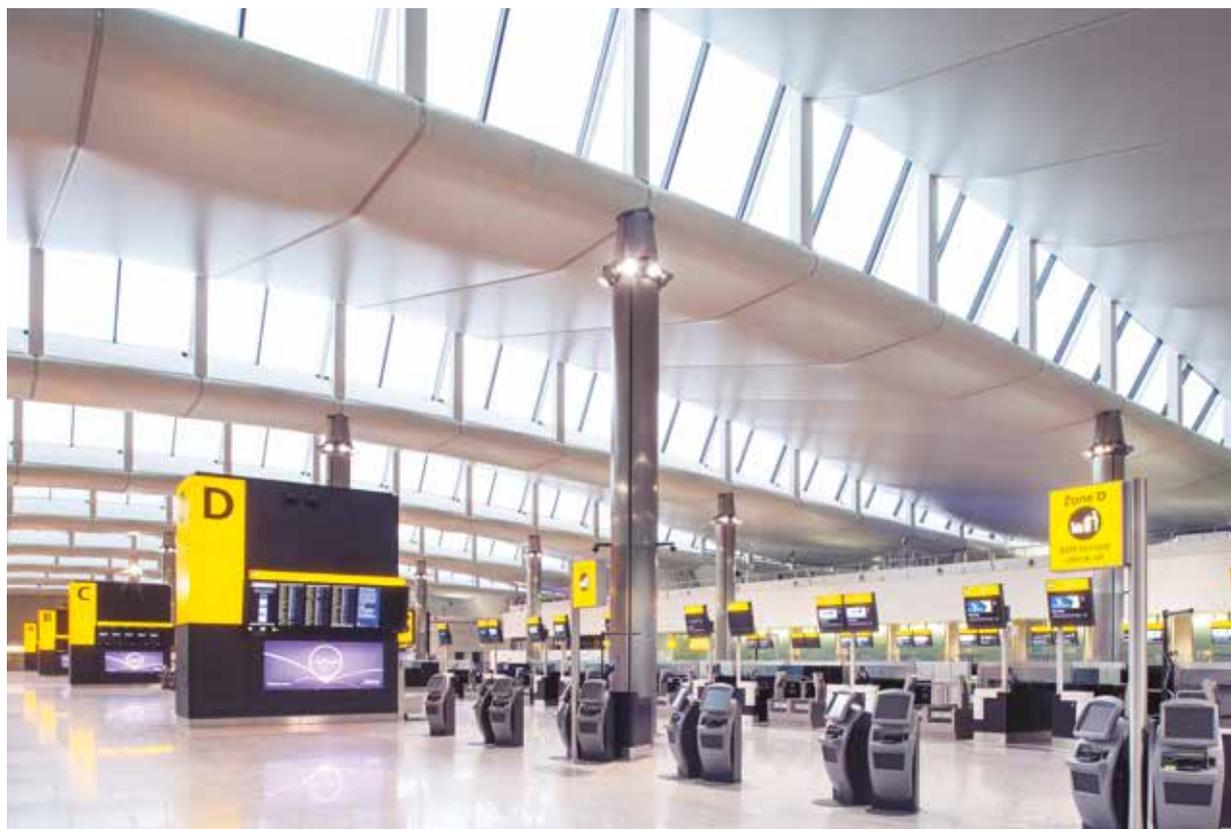
Airports are where journeys start and end. They provide an essential service for business travellers, holiday makers and people visiting friends and relatives. They are also a vital part of the UK's transport network.

The aviation sector is a key driver of economic growth, helping the UK to create businesses and jobs. The sector contributes over £50 billion to the UK economy, provides over a million jobs, supports 2.5 million tourism jobs and pays over £8 billion a year in taxes.

Impressive though these numbers are, they don't convey the important role that airports around the country play in their local communities. They are, of course, key players in regional economic development, but they are much more than that, enabling local people to secure skills, training and jobs, helping local charities, and inspiring local school children.

You can find out much more about what local airports are doing in your area by visiting their websites, but this précis will give you an overview of how airports up and down the country are contributing to the communities they serve.

**Pictured right:**  
Heathrow's new Terminal 2 has directly supported 35,000 jobs right across the country.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UK airports play a vital role in supporting the wider economy

---

Airports around the UK help people to find jobs and start their own businesses

---

Airport local community funds award grants to small community-led organisations

---

UK airports and their staff help to fund local health charities

---

Many airport community initiatives focus on inspiring children and young people



# The role of airports in economic development

The UK is home to some of the world's leading international airports but, whether airports are large or small, it is easy to underestimate the vital role that they play in helping to support the wider economy.

A strong and well-connected airport can be a crucial element in the success of local businesses. **Aberdeen International Airport** provides 2,000 jobs on site and supports a further 4,000 Scottish jobs. Its network of connections across the UK and Europe plays a key role in helping to sell courses to the 1,700 overseas students who attend Aberdeen Business School and want to make home visits and to see the UK and Europe conveniently

and affordably.

**Bristol Airport** employs 3,000 people on site and every overseas visitor using the airport is worth over £400 to the South West economy. Katherine Bennett OBE, Vice President, Public Affairs, at Airbus in the UK explains that: "Strong regional transport links are vital for a global company such as Airbus. Bristol Airport provides an important service for our partners, whether

suppliers or employees, thus enabling aerospace technology and know-how, designed in the region, to be put to maximum use".

**Heathrow Airport** is one of the largest employment sites in the UK, with over 76,000 employees and 320 businesses. It accounts for one in five local jobs, but it also has a significant impact on the national economy. Consider, for example, the inspiring story of Heathrow's

**Pictured right:** London Luton's "Get into Airports" programme, delivered in partnership with the Prince's Trust.



brand new Terminal 2. The Queen's Terminal was "made in Britain". At £2.5 billion, it has been one of the largest privately funded infrastructure projects in the country and will welcome 20 million passengers a year. Its design and construction will have directly supported 35,000 jobs right across the country, from the 77 tonne, 70 metre entrance hall Slipstream sculpture, fabricated in Hull to the direction signs manufactured in Exeter. The Terminal 2 project has helped to underline that there is a wealth of expertise, skills and talent across the country and that the UK remains extremely competitive, both on price and product quality.

**Liverpool's John Lennon Airport**, with over 2,000 people working on or near the site, is a significant driver of prosperity in the Liverpool city region, contributing £170 million to the local economy. Cognitio, a Cheshire-based professional marketing services company, is typical of local businesses whose growth has been facilitated by the airport's connections. The company says that it has gained where both

leisure and business routes have grown, describing new routes to Poland, in particular, as "a gift to the business community".

**London City Airport** has routes to over 40 destinations across the UK, Europe and the United States and nearly 3.5 million passengers pass through its doors every year. KPMG Senior Partner, Dr. Ashley Steel, says that the airport "is important in helping to make our merged KPMG Europe operate efficiently. It enables colleagues from our offices across Europe to do a full day's work at our Canary Wharf European HQ before returning home the same day. It enables our European firm to provide the very best client service".

**London Stansted Airport** is the biggest single site employer in the East of England, with over 10,200 people working for nearly 200 on-airport companies. Stansted offers more than 150 international connections and handles over 200,000 tonnes of cargo a year, helping to connect the region's small and medium sized enterprises with the global marketplace.

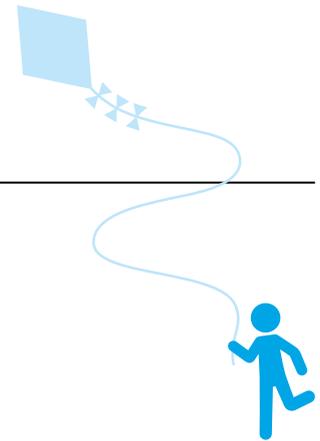
Its annual 'Meet the Buyers' event gives local SMEs and entrepreneurs direct access to companies based at or near the airport and it is estimated that the most recent event will generate over £1.5 million of new contracts for East of England firms.

**Newcastle International Airport** plays a vital economic role in North East England. It contributes 3,200 jobs on site and supports 8,000 in the North East region, to which it makes a £650 million economic contribution. Since 2006 the value of exports flown through the airport has risen from under £20 million to over £250 million, with most of them carried by Emirates to Dubai and beyond. Duco Ltd, a £60 million subsea oil and gas manufacturer, employs 500 people at its site in Newcastle and flies engineers internationally to work on projects, installations and repairs. Then there is the value to the local economy of visitors arriving at the airport, with each incoming visitor to Newcastle Airport spending on average £720 in the region.



# Helping local communities

UK airports have long understood the unique role they are able to play in raising money for and supporting local community groups and organisations.



**Aberdeen International Airport** donated over £80,000 to charities and community groups in its area in 2013. It also encourages staff to volunteer in their own communities or for causes close to their own hearts. Each year staff can nominate themselves to win a volunteering award, with over £10,000 given to local charities at the most recent ceremony. Airport staff support local mountain rescue operations, lead youth groups, help emergency services and give their time to kids' sporting groups. Every year the airport partners with a charity to take part in Celebrate Aberdeen, a huge parade through the centre of Aberdeen that attracts thousands of spectators and participants.

**Birmingham Airport's** local community fund is a typical example of the help that many airports offer to those living closest to them. Its Community Trust fund awards grants of up to £3,000 to small community-led organisations in those areas most affected by its operations. Since 1998 the airport has invested more than £1.2 million in the local community, helping more than 500 local groups with environmental improvement,

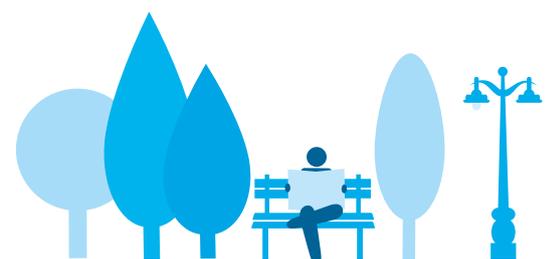
heritage conservation, encouraging or protecting wildlife and facilities for sport and recreation.

**Bristol Airport's** local community fund invests in a range of projects which benefit the local community and environment, with support focused on projects with recreational, educational and environmental benefits. Most recently these have included an improved pedestrian crossing, improved road safety signage, courses for small businesses in North Somerset, a community art programme, outdoor play equipment and a countryside day, teaching children about food production.

**Glasgow Airport's** FlightPath Fund was established in 2010 to provide financial support to local charities and community groups. Since then over £750,000 has been awarded to over 200 community groups, charities and innovative projects. Funding is targeted in three key areas of education, employment and the environment, and is focused in the four local authorities of Glasgow, Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire, which lie under the airport's flight path. In 2014 the airport is

providing nearly £40,000 from the fund to a local charity to fund the cost of four tandem go-karts. These will enable children and adults with additional support and learning needs to experience the thrill of go-karting.

**Heathrow Airport** has invested £750,000 per annum in the Heathrow Community Fund and £1m per annum in the Hillingdon Community Trust. Both provide grants for local projects and support a wide range of community focused projects, including The Waterman's Art Centre which received £25,000 to help fund Urban Ambush, a four-week festival of creative programmes for young people from Ealing, Hounslow and Hillingdon during the summer of 2013. In addition, the Willow Tree Centre in Hillingdon received grants of £25,000 in both 2012 and 2013 to help build new volunteer and maintenance facilities. Volunteers, including staff from Heathrow, maintain



15 acres of woodland, reed beds and meadow with the centre providing outdoor activity facilities for children.

**Newcastle International Airport** has the city's

Maggie's Centre at Freeman Hospital, which opened in May 2013 and seeks to meet the practical, emotional and social needs of people with cancer, as its adopted charity. It also sponsors local

football and cricket teams, supports an annual duck race, sponsors village flower beds and supports a project that encourages growth of the red squirrel population.

**Pictured right:**

Residents of Blackwell, a nearby village to Bristol Airport, celebrate the building of an improved crossing, made possible by the airport's community fund.



**Pictured right:**

Glasgow Airport has provided nearly £40,000 to a local charity to enable children and adults with additional support and learning needs to experience the thrill of go-karting.



**Pictured right:**

Bristol Airport funds a programme that teaches local children about food production.



**Pictured right:**

Luton Airport raised £35,000 for the charity Sue Ryder by taking part in a sponsored cycle ride to Paris.



# Helping local health charities



UK airports and their staff have a long tradition of health philanthropy, helping to provide funding for local health charities.

In 2013, staff at **Gatwick Airport** raised more than £25,000 for its three nominated charities: St Catherine's Hospice, Sussex Wildlife Trust and its own on-airport charity Gatwick TravelCare. In addition the airport organises a Fundraising Week every year which unites the airport, encouraging staff to raise money in creative ways and offering passengers the opportunity to contribute also.

**London City Airport** has provided 15 years of fundraising support to its local charity partner across the docks, raising more than £750,000 for Richard House Children's Hospice. Richard House offers free care and

support to families whose children have life-limiting and complex healthcare needs, many of them from some of the poorest areas of London. In 2013 a 40-strong group of City Airport staff, led by Chief Executive, Declan Collier (and including local MP, Stephen Timms), cycled 166 miles from London to Amsterdam and raised £25,000 for the hospice.

Around the same time, employees of **London Luton Airport** cycled from the airport's control tower to the Eiffel Tower in Paris and raised £35,000 for Sue Ryder, the charity that provides care for people with life-changing illnesses. All of the proceeds from the bike ride went to support Sue Ryder's work

locally at St John's Hospice in Bedfordshire and Stagenhoe in Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire has also been one of the beneficiaries of a fundraising drive by staff at **London Stansted Airport**, which has helped to raise nearly £15,000 for the Essex & Herts Air Ambulance Trust, a charity which provides a free life-saving helicopter emergency medical service for the critically ill and injured in the two counties and the surrounding area. The helicopters ensure that specialist doctors and paramedics can quickly reach the scene of an incident with life-saving support equipment to deliver advanced clinical care.

# Inspiring children and young people

---

Since the very first flights, aviation has always fired the imagination of children and young people, so it is not surprising that many airport community initiatives focus on this group.

---

**Biggin Hill**, a major business aviation airport, is in the second year of its Nick Davidson memorial flying scholarship. Captain Nick Davidson was a British Airways pilot, who had earlier spent time as an instructor at Biggin Hill. Just before he died from cancer in 2012 he agreed to fund a legacy which would enable a young person between the ages of 18 and 25 to learn to fly at Biggin Hill and qualify to the standard of a full Private Pilot's Licence. The overall value of the training package provided by the airport and the Surrey & Kent Flying Club is £10,000.

**Birmingham Airport's** partnership with Small Heath secondary school has been in place for seven years and focuses on providing students with real-life experiences that excite and challenge them and help them to develop the skills that they will need when they leave school and start work. The school is located in one of inner city Birmingham's most deprived wards and almost all of its 1,300 pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The airport has worked closely with the school to enable teachers to exploit the rich learning resource that it represents to embed work-related learning into the

curriculum, delivering projects that help students become more employable and confident individuals. Highlights have included preparing and serving food to 350 VIP guests at the Royal opening of the airport's £50 million international pier. The partnership has become a cornerstone of the school's innovative approach to work-related learning, which has been widely recognised as a model for future partnerships between business and education.

**Birmingham Airport** also has its own Flight School, a dedicated facility within the terminal building, opened by Business Secretary, Vince Cable MP, in 2012 and used by pupils from schools across the Midlands. Airport staff and teachers work together to develop projects covering many areas of the curriculum, including science and engineering, the environment and history study days, where students have met Second World War veterans.

**East Midlands Airport** has won a Business in the Community award for its work inspiration programmes, which provide

**Pictured right:** Students at Horsforth School in Leeds developed a business plan to set up and run their own airline from Leeds Bradford Airport.

week-long opportunities for students to understand the varied roles in the travel and tourism sector that are available at the airport and other roles for students with an interest in science, technology, engineering or mathematics.

**Heathrow Airport's** Primary and Secondary School Challenge has been developed to support academic achievement and raise the aspirations of young people in the boroughs of Ealing, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Slough and Spelthorne. Through the Primary School Challenge the airport invests in over 50 schools, providing a fun way for students to explore their enterprise skills, help students' social and personal development and motivate students to continue in education. The Secondary School Challenge, meanwhile, aims to encourage further study and a career in Science, Technology, Maths and Engineering, and is supported by Heathrow Engineering Apprenticeships, Engineering Managers and employee volunteers.

**Leeds Bradford Airport** has partnered with British Airways to offer students from schools across West Yorkshire an aviation master class, led by airport and airline staff. Fifteen schools from across West Yorkshire competed to develop business plans to set up and run their own airline, with the prize being awarded to Horsforth School in Leeds.



# Helping job seekers and young entrepreneurs

---

Airports around the UK have been quick to recognise that in today's competitive economic climate people need all the help they can get to find jobs or start their own businesses.

---

**Gatwick Airport** sponsors Young Start-Up Talent, a Sussex and Kent community-based project whose aim is to help 16 to 25 year-olds with an entrepreneurial flair for business to make their dreams a reality. It offers business and professional support to young people aiming to set up their own businesses in the Gatwick area, Brighton & Hove and Kent. The project runs workshops in schools to develop business ideas and to provide start-up financial support for the most promising.

In 2014 the **Heathrow Academy** celebrates ten years of supporting local unemployed residents into the workplace in the retail, construction and aviation & logistics sectors at the airport. Candidates come from one of the priority boroughs around Heathrow (Ealing, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Slough and Spelthorne) and are either unemployed, school leavers or looking for work. The academy courses help people to develop the skills that employers want and that will help them to thrive at Heathrow. Over the past ten years the Academy has put 3,446 candidates through

training and 2,323 people into work (including a record 525 in 2013), contributing savings to the public purse of over £6 million.

**London City Airport** is an attractive proposition for London business travellers but, in contrast to its typical passenger, the local area in which the airport is situated around East London's Royal Docks suffers from high rates of deprivation. The airport's award-winning Take off into Work programme has been running for five years and aims to help tackle the high unemployment rate in the local borough of Newham, which is almost a third higher than the national average. The programme gives local unemployed residents two weeks of airport-specific employability training, followed by a two-week work placement at the airport. Since its inception the scheme has helped over 350 people into work, two thirds of whom had previously been unemployed for six months or more.

**London Luton Airport** has won a Business in the Community Local Impact Award for its Get into Airports programme, delivered in partnership with

the Prince's Trust. Participants in the programme undergo two weeks intensive training, covering such aspects as First Aid, CV workshops, interviews and developing presentation skills. A further two weeks are spent in work placements within the airport's operations and with business partners. Since its inception in 2011 the scheme has grown to two programmes a year and seen 65% of participants gaining employment onsite as a direct result. The airport's model has since been employed by First Capital Connect, who have just completed their first Get into Railways programme.

Education into employment is the lead theme of **Manchester Airport's** corporate social responsibility work. Its Airport Academy has been running for ten years and, through its 20-week paid work placements gives unemployed people the skills and experience they need to secure work. The airport's new Young People Skills Academy targets young people in Wythenshawe. Teams of experts will work with 75 people over two years to assist them to develop skills and obtain qualifications that will help them to secure their first jobs.

**Pictured right:**

Heathrow Airport's Secondary School Challenge in action.



**Pictured right:**

London City's Take off into Work programme in action.



**Pictured right:**

Manchester Airport's Academy has been running for 10 years and helps unemployed people get back into work through 20-week paid work placements.



**Pictured far right:**

Manchester Airport's Young People Skills Academy.





**Pictured above:** Members of 2030 Squadron, Air Training Corps received a Trust Fund award of £3,000 from Birmingham Airport for new IT equipment which will enable them to more effectively study for their badges.



**Pictured above:** Students from Small Heath school in Birmingham produced and delivered the catering at several recent launch events at Birmingham Airport.

---

## Round-up

Airports play a vital role in the UK economy and are an essential part of the UK's transport network. This publication from airports' trade body, the Airport Operators Association, has sought to give a picture of how the UK's airports also make an important contribution to the communities in which they operate. It is only a snapshot of just a few of a very much wider range of activities. The relevance and success of all of the airports' community programmes have been built on local community engagement, so if you would like to learn more or have ideas about how your local airport could do more to help your community, please either contact us at the AOA, and we will ensure that your enquiry is forwarded, or get in touch with the airport direct.

---

Airport Operators Association  
3 Birdcage Walk  
London  
SW1H 9JJ  
T: 020 7799 3171  
E: [info@aoa.org.uk](mailto:info@aoa.org.uk)  
[www.aoa.org.uk](http://www.aoa.org.uk)



**AOA**  
THE VOICE OF UK AIRPORTS