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UK AIRPORTS SHOW BIG RISE IN HELP FOR DISABLED PASSENGERS

- Top 30 UK airports ranked on accessibility for disabled passengers
- 16 UK Airports ranked 'very good' – up from six airports in last year's review
- Birmingham, Gatwick and Stansted have not met CAA expectations
- Manchester Airport ranked 'poor' for the second year in a row

The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has today published its annual report on the accessibility services provided by the top 30 UK airports.

The report highlights that there are more than three million requests for assistance at UK airports annually – a rise of almost 80 per cent since 2010.

Satisfaction levels remain high, with 83 per cent of people requesting assistance stating that they are 'satisfied', with 54 per cent of those being 'very satisfied'.

The report reveals that 16 UK airports have been rated 'very good', up from six airports in last year's review. This includes Edinburgh Airport which was rated 'poor' two years ago.

Good progress has also been made by Heathrow Airport, which has this year been classified as 'good' following its 'poor' rating last year.

But three airports, Birmingham, Gatwick and Stansted have not met the CAA's expectations and have been told that they must improve.

Manchester Airport has received a 'poor' rating for the second year in a row; the only airport to receive this rating this year. By monitoring the airport's performance, we identified issues in relation to long waiting times for assistance and issues with the recording and reporting of performance data.

The CAA's framework, the first of its kind in the world, was introduced to drive improvements in performance and help deliver a consistent, high-quality service for disabled passengers across UK airports. The Civil Aviation Authority assesses airports against a number of measures to establish how well they are performing for disabled passengers, including asking those passengers using the assistance service how it performed for them.

Paul Smith, Consumers and Markets Director at the UK Civil Aviation Authority, said: "We are pleased that surveys show that satisfaction levels remain high and the vast majority of passengers' journeys go smoothly. The improved performance of many airports means disabled passengers should have even more confidence to travel from UK airports.

"However, there are still too many occasions where things go wrong. We will continue to focus our work on ensuring that standards are maintained and improved, particularly for those whose experience has not been as positive as it could have been. Where we see

examples of bad practice, we will not hesitate to hold airports to account and take the necessary enforcement action.”

Baroness Sugg, UK Aviation Minister, added: “It’s essential that passengers with reduced mobility or hidden disabilities get the service they deserve every time they fly.

“The CAA has stepped up its work in this area and plays an important role in showing where improvement still needs to be made.

“I welcome the progress made by airports to improve accessibility and will continue to work with all of the aviation industry to make flying easier for disabled passengers.”

-ENDS-

Link to CAA report: <http://www.caa.co.uk/CAP1679>

