

Heathrow strike threatens to disrupt the coronation

(Courtesy of Joe Ellison, TravelPulse)



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Security workers at [London's Heathrow Airport](#) (LHR) plan to strike over pay next month in a move that may significantly affect travelers arriving in the capital city for the coronation of King Charles III.

The walkouts are scheduled for May 4-6, May 9-10 and May 25-27. The strikes will largely involve security staff at Heathrow's Terminal 5, which could see increased passenger wait times.

Charles' lavish ascension to the throne is due to take place May 6 at Westminster Abbey. Hundreds of thousands of visitors are expected to fly into the capital to line the streets and witness history being made.

Executives with London's biggest airport say they've had a new deal on the table for workers since January. The deal would provide a 10% pay increase in addition to a lump sum payment of 1,150 British pounds (about \$1,432). However, leaders accused Unite the Union (a British and Irish trade union) of not putting this deal to its members to vote on.

Unite claims the deal isn't adequate or on par with the rising cost of living. "Strikes next month will cause further disruption to airport passengers but this dispute is a direct result of Heathrow's stubborn refusal to make an offer that meets our members' expectations," Unite's regional officer Wayne King said.



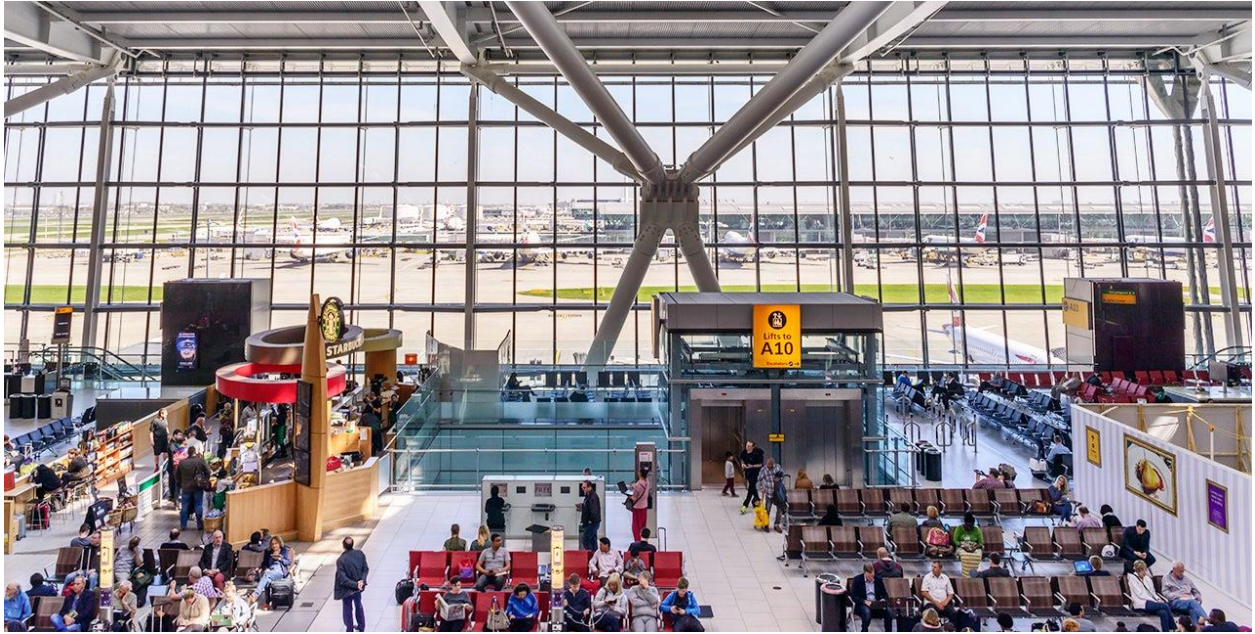
Passengers in Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport. DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

"Our members have been crystal clear they are seeking a substantial permanent increase in pay," King shared. "A small one off lump sum payment will not alleviate the financial pressures our members are facing on a daily basis."

His words were echoed by Unite's Sharon Graham, who slammed the United Kingdom's biggest airport: "Yet again, we have a chief executive in John Holland-Kaye who thinks it is acceptable to boost his earnings ... while he denies his own workers a decent pay rise. This dispute is bound to escalate with more workers being balloted and disruption set to continue throughout the summer."

In response, the airport has issued its own scathing attack, alluding to how a recent walkout of close to 1,400 security officers over Easter didn't drastically affect its operations.

"We kept Heathrow running smoothly during the first 10 days of Unite's failed industrial action, and passengers can have confidence that we will do so again this time," a spokesperson for Heathrow Airport said.



Terminal 5 in Heathrow Airport. BRASILNUT1/GETTY IMAGES

[British Airways](#), the sole operator from Terminal 5, was forced to cancel 5% of its flights during the 10-day walkouts over Easter.

Still, airport executives remain defiant: “We will not let Unite disrupt the flow of visitors to the U.K. during such an important period for the country,” the airport spokesperson added.

“Instead of chasing headlines, Unite should listen to its members. The majority of Heathrow colleagues do not want to strike and want to accept the offer on the table. Each day that Unite refuses to allow members to vote on the 10% pay increase and a £1,150 lump sum payment is a day that costs colleagues money they deserve now.”

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These are far from the first strikes to affect Heathrow of late. Following the easing of COVID-19-related restrictions globally, it's been a constant firefight for leaders looking to quash financial disputes from [fuel crews](#) to [hundreds of British Airways check-in staff members](#). So far, they've largely gotten it right, even helping to mediate agreements between third-party agencies and airlines. However, threats of disruption continue to loom over operations on a seemingly weekly basis.



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It's not just Heathrow, either. British travel is also currently contending with a walkout of over 3,000 workers at the HM Passport Office.

Public and Commercial Services Union members ranging from passport examiners to interview officers and administrators will strike from May 2-6 in a dispute largely over pay and pensions, adding to the government's woes following a continued backlog in the wait for applications.

If you are flying into or out of Heathrow on these affected strike dates in May — particularly if it's with [British Airways](#) in Terminal 5 — be sure to keep in contact with your airline either by social media or by phone.

And if you do fancy a coronation-inspired trip to London, read about [hotels in the capital used by actual royalty](#) — not all of which will cost a king's ransom.