

1. Chairman, members of the Committee, good afternoon and thank you for inviting daa to address the Committee today.
2. To begin, I would like to take this opportunity to address our passengers directly, and to apologise - unreservedly - to everyone who was impacted by the challenges at Dublin Airport last weekend.
3. That experience jars with our tradition of providing a positive passenger experience for our passengers.
4. While the past number of weeks have been challenging, I fully appreciate that what our passengers experienced at the airport last weekend fell extremely short of our desired standards.
5. I appreciate the anger, frustration and upset that this has caused.
6. Put simply, we failed in our duty to our passengers and I want to offer my deep apologies to everyone impacted and indeed to the members of the Oireachtas, as I also recognise the reputational damage to our country for which connectivity and ease of access is our lifeblood.
7. I also want to assure passengers that - if you were affected by last weekend's queues - you will not be left out of pocket. These challenges were not of passengers' making in any way, and we will work closely with everyone impacted to make sure that they are not impacted financially. If passengers were affected by last weekend's events, I would ask them to complete the online form on our website at dublinairport.com or email customerexperience@dublinairport.com and we will ensure speedy recompense.
8. I also want to take a moment at the outset of today's meeting to acknowledge the incredible efforts of all of daa's employees, during what has been a hugely challenging time. Our people are fiercely proud of our organisation - and their commitment and their efforts have been outstanding, particularly over recent weeks and months.
9. However, I appreciate that apologies are not what people are most interested in today. The Committee and the public will be very keen to understand:
 - i. Exactly how these challenges have arisen.
 - ii. The immediate steps that we are taking as a business to address them, and to ensure that last Sunday's events will not be repeated.
10. There are 3 key factors which have led us to the current situation.
11. First, the entire global aviation industry is currently experiencing a rapid and accelerating recovery in passenger numbers at a rate that nobody predicted. In fact, most predicted a return to pre-pandemic levels would not return until 2024 or 2025 at the earliest.
12. Every credible rating agency, analyst and industry body had predicted that, during 2022, traffic levels would remain at less than 70% of 2019 levels. Dublin Airport planned for a return to 75 to 80% of 2019 levels. However, by May, traffic going through Terminal 1 alone was at 95% of 2019 levels.

13. To put this in context, on average during May, the airport has handled almost 16,500 extra passengers every single day which no one in the industry had predicted six months ago.
14. Second, we have faced significant challenges in ensuring that the airport has sufficient people, particularly in security screening, to process these huge levels of passengers.
15. When the pandemic hit, Dublin Airport's passenger numbers fell from 100,000 per day to just a few hundred. Our business was losing €1 million every single day. The consensus was that we would face a long, slow recovery.
16. As a result, we were facing the future as a business that was significantly bigger than industry demand could sustain. We took the difficult decision of reducing staffing levels across our business by 25% between 2020 and 2021.
17. From the second half of 2021 the outlook for the industry gradually began to improve in tandem with mass vaccination from COVID-19 and a lowering of infection.
18. Understandably, a key question that we are asked is: why did we not recruit more quickly, during 2021, once it became clear that a recovery was underway? It is important to be clear that daa did commence recruitment at significant levels immediately at this stage in 2021. We continued this recruitment into early 2022, to ensure that the business would have more than enough people to meet anticipated demand.
19. However, as a result of new EU Enhanced Background Checks we faced huge challenges in bringing these people on board, none of which related to the employment terms on offer. Consequently, we lost 40% of the new security staff we had recruited, with the remainder having to wait an additional 7 weeks before they could start in our business. This created a big resourcing gap that we have been working to address ever since.
20. Third, and to compound matters, the start of 2022 brought exceptional levels of absence due to COVID-19, with up to 25% of all security staff absent during the start of the year.
21. The combination of these three factors had a significant impact on the business and created very significant queues for our passengers on March 27.
22. Since March 27, we have implemented a significant work programme to address these challenges.
23. Since recruitment began in 2021, we have now recruited over 300 new Airport Search Unit Officers, with 150 officers recruited since the end of April 2022 alone. We will bring another 70 officers on board over the coming weeks. daa has set no upward limit on recruitment numbers.
24. However, given the absolute criticality of security training, the process of onboarding these new staff cannot be rushed, and while we are making significant progress, it will take us another month before we get the full complement of additional trained security officers deployed on the floor of the airport.

25. We have deployed a companywide task force of office-based staff and senior management. This includes more than 450 people, who have now worked over 2,000 shifts, and over 8,500 hours in support of our frontline staff.
26. We have also introduced overtime and incentives for our security staff, secured additional external queue management resources, and introduced a very wide range of process improvements, passenger experiences and communications initiatives.
27. In fact, Chairman, I wrote to you as recently as last Friday on the positive progress we have been achieving across a range of key areas, which had led to an improved service level overall. Up until last weekend, 94% of all departing passengers travelling through the airport had cleared security in 45 minutes or less during May, while almost 80% had cleared security in 30 minutes or less.
28. However, the fact remains that we have been - and are still - managing a resource gap as we pivot from losses of €1m per day and 1,000 redundancies during COVID, to a dramatic recovery of air travel, faster and earlier than anyone predicted
29. In parallel with our substantial recruitment and 'resourcing up' process - set to deliver a further increase in processing capacity this month and next - we have been operating to a plan, albeit one that is predicated on fine margins, and the Herculean efforts of our staff
30. Reflecting on last weekend, Friday saw a similar number of passengers pass through Dublin Airport as Sunday, and travel without incident and without undue delay; on Sunday that plan failed.
31. Let me explain why and also why I have confidence in our updated plan
32. On Sunday last, we had rostered and resourced staff to meet the demands of serving 50,000 departing passengers across both Terminals 1 and 2 with 250 security officers and a further 24 Team Supervisors and Coordinators. This would have allowed us to open sufficient security lanes and x-ray machines to cater for the first wave of departing passengers.
33. However, on the day we were down 37 officers – 17 of these were new recruits which our rostering system had anticipated would have completed training to allow them to work last Sunday but they had not yet been certified. This anomaly has since been resolved in our processes. We also incurred a loss of 20 officers that were absent from work on the day.
34. Many of those 37 staff have particular clearances and certifications required to open and operate a lane and so they cannot be readily substituted by other daa staff. Without this capacity, we were unable to bring in substitute staff at short notice in the early hours of Sunday morning. This compounded the queueing problem throughout much of Sunday.
35. The impact of this reduction in our anticipated human resources meant that we were unable to open 6 security lanes, 3 in each terminal, a loss of 30% during the first wave.

36. Each lane ordinarily screens 200 passengers per hour and being down 6 lanes, we had a processing deficit of 1200 passengers an hour. We were unable to achieve our anticipated productivity levels and this quickly led to queues forming for security.
37. As more and more passengers joined the growing queues for the available security lanes, the situation became compounded leading to a decision at 10.30 am to advise those passengers queueing outside the terminal with flights departing before noon that they would not make their flights.
38. This leads me to what will be different this Bank Holiday Weekend and into the extremely busy summer months of June, July and August ahead.
39. We are focusing on passenger experience improvements across three core areas, whilst also introducing new escalation and triage mechanisms in the event of any unanticipated issues arising. We have submitted a detailed plan that is focused on a better passenger experience and the three key areas are as follows:
 - i. Maximising the availability of staff resources
 - ii. Increasing the number of security lanes open at peak times
 - iii. Improving queue management
40. Our advice to passengers due to fly out of Dublin Airport over the coming period, is to arrive at the airport at least two and a half hours before the departure of short-haul flights to Europe and the UK and at least three and a half hours for long-haul flights. If passengers are checking in bags, we advise to add up to an additional hour for bag drop or check-in. Airline check-in desk and bag drop opening times vary, so passengers are advised to plan accordingly.
41. At times when the terminals get particularly busy, we may triage access to the terminals and control entry into the terminal, based on the departure time of flights if necessary. A protocol for the deployment of this is in place.
42. Special consideration will be given to those passengers who require special assistance.
43. For departing passengers, access to the appropriate terminals will be controlled and will require the presentation of documentation indicating the time of flight such as a booking confirmation or boarding card.
44. daa will put in place bad weather cover, seating, and toilets in the holding area as quickly as possible in the coming days following trialling of this system over the June Bank Holiday Weekend.
45. Chairman, following these incremental measures we are confident we have a robust plan and we do not envisage a repeat of what occurred last Sunday. Though challenges remain the measures we have taken will very substantially mitigate risk this weekend and beyond.
46. And, should unanticipated issues arise, we have appropriate escalation and triage mechanisms focussed on ensuring no passengers will miss their flights.

47. Chairman I hope this provides clarity for the Committee on the specific initiatives and actions that daa has been taking in recent weeks and months, an explanation of what happened last Sunday and why and more important the areas we have been addressing for the busy weeks ahead.
48. While challenges remain, and we continue to operate a very tight operation with finite margins for error, a very significant programme of work is ongoing by our dedicated people to bring the operation back to the standards our customers should be able to expect.
49. We want all of our passengers to have a positive experience travelling into and out of Dublin Airport and, as the summer season ramps up, we will continue to drive further improvements in our overall service offering to this end.