

Sky Handling Partner

Statement by Sky Handling Partner

Sky Handling Partner provides third party ground handling services to airlines at Dublin Airport. The observations and opinions offered are solely those of the company and are not expressed on behalf of Airlines, other Ground Handling agents or, indeed, any other airport community member.

During the course of the pandemic, it was appropriate, and entirely justified, that public health was prioritised. The restrictions imposed on International travel resulted in a 75% reduction in our activity at Dublin Airport. Inevitably, a contraction in our workforce took place as valued team members opted to seek employment in industries they considered more secure. The exodus of skilled experience and expertise in 2020 and 2021 will take time to replenish but robust progress is being made.

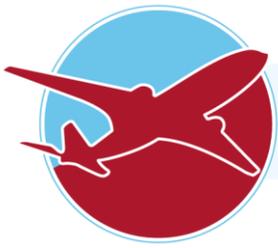
SHP is mindful and conscious of the travel experience of passengers in Dublin Airport this year. The rapid rebound in International travel has presented significant challenges for aviation globally. Dublin has been no exception in this regard. Service standards have simply not returned to pre-pandemic levels (OTP is 78% for the year to date whereas our 10 year average in Dublin trends at 98.8%). SHP accepts and acknowledges responsibility for short comings in our own performance standards in 2022 and sincerely apologises where this has resulted in disruption and inconvenience for passengers.

As a company we have invested substantial resources to increase our workforce with financial incentives to promote recruitment and retention. It is critical that Ground Handling can, post pandemic, attract the best and brightest to our industry and I am pleased that SHP has managed to successfully recruit 280 employees who are either live on current operations or due to complete training within the next fortnight.

It is important to point out the difficulties associated with recruitment in the first three months of 2022. This was due to the implementation of EU Regulation 2019-103 regarding enhanced security background checks. Whilst security and safety are paramount in any airport environment the processing time to perform these additional checks was excessive – taking several weeks for Airport IDs to be completed – ensuring there was no material uplift in resource levels for Q1 2022.

Formal correspondence was sent to the Department of Transport, and An Garda Síochána, on the 10th March 2022 outlining our concerns and referencing the potential impact on Dublin operations. The current Airport ID processing time has reduced to 3-4 weeks, a more reasonable and manageable timeframe. This is to be welcomed. The recent increase in Airport Escort IDs, to 14 days, provides an opportunity to undertake additional Airside training for our new employees. Again, this is to be welcomed and acknowledged as an example of relevant stakeholders working together to address the unique challenges of summer 2022.

A source of frustration, as we embark on a significant upskilling programme of current staff, is the number of Non-EU licence holders who are restricted from driving at the Airport. A key



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element of our operation is having a sufficient number of drivers trained to operate vehicles that ferry passenger baggage and cargo to and from the aircraft side. It is important that the Department of Transport and NDLS revisit these restrictions as this would immediately provide a large increase in the driving pool available to SHP.

Short shipped baggage volumes from International hubs that feed Dublin Airport has been at an unprecedented scale and continues to prove extremely challenging. Some European Airports have imposed passenger or flight caps to minimise disruption for the remainder of the summer season. Likewise, there has also been curtailment of certain airline schedules and it is expected that this will help alleviate, but not eliminate, the instances of short shipped baggage. In the meantime, SHP, with the support of daa, has managed to secure a Landside location adjacent to Terminal 1 and Terminal 2. This location enables us to move baggage to a secure site where our teams can work on processing bags for local delivery by courier or reflighting if necessary. More importantly, it also permits passengers to attend and claim lost baggage. This is a critical development as passenger access to Airside locations are limited by security protocols. Airlines are also extensively supporting the repatriation of baggage by sending support teams to Dublin.

SHP has a strong and proud record of achievement over the last two decades. We are a proactive and valued member of the Airport community and have engaged constructively with all relevant stakeholders to mitigate the impact of disruption at Dublin Airport. We are absolutely committed to contributing to an improved passenger experience at Dublin Airport. It is important that I publicly commend the immense effort, flexibility and commitment demonstrated by SHP front line operational and support teams over the last several months. I am very proud of each and everyone of them. Equally, I am grateful for the excellent collaboration and partnership of our airline customers during these exceptional times.