

## Fast Track Passport Control Trial Jan-April 2024

### Quant Research Brief

#### Background

Heathrow's vision is to deliver the 'best airport service in the world' by making every journey better. Fast Track Security is Heathrow's single most important touch point with our premium passenger segment and is a key barometer of how their overall airport experience is judged.

The Fast Track (FT) service was launched by British Airports Authority (BAA) back in 2008 as a way for priority departing passengers to bypass the lengthy queues that existed in Security search areas at many British airports at that time, due to the more stringent search processes introduced following a number of high-profile terrorist incidents world-wide. It was originally introduced to passengers qualifying with major participating airlines by dint of airline ticket class, but it was subsequently made available as a paid-for service. The service has been available at Heathrow for most of the period between 2008 up until when Covid hit in March 2020.

Since Covid, however, Fast Track at Heathrow has only been available via airlines to qualifying priority passengers, but Heathrow is now considering a re-introduction of the paid-for service. The separate research project you're undertaking is exploring interest in this.

The industry is changing, and as more and more airports are starting to offer a fast-track security product to all passengers for a fee, this is changing perceptions and the experience of this type of product.

A paid-for Fast Track Passport Control service has also been made available at certain other UK airports (in concert with Border Force) and Heathrow *is now about to commence a 3-month trial* of such a service, BUT only for qualifying priority passengers who are not eligible to use E-gates in Passport Control, from January 16<sup>th</sup>. Vouchers will be provided via airlines direct to those passengers who qualify for the service.

The service will have a dedicated Fast Track Lane & desk in each of terminals 2, 3 & 4 with operating hours between: 06:30–22:00 hrs. Qualifying passengers will be met by the Ethos Farm 'Heathrow Helpers', who are hosting the service, as passengers arrive in the Passport Control Hall.

#### Research Objectives

The following objectives have been assumed for this research – to be discussed with the Commercial Premium Services & Border Force Service Leads:

1. To evaluate passenger reactions to the new Fast Track Passport Control service overall and also to key aspects of the process such as:
  - a. Comparison of experience vs current desks/ e-gates
    - i. Time taken queueing
    - ii. Helpfulness & attitude of staff
  - b. Wayfinding to the FT Lane.
  - c. The help provided by Heathrow Helpers (Ethos Farm staff).
  - d. Process of accessing vouchers provided by the airlines
    - i. How aware were they in advance of their trip of this process
    - ii. How they were made aware of the voucher
    - iii. Was it clear how the system would work
    - iv. Would they be open to using a QR code to access the voucher (and if so at what point would they expect to use this).

2. To evaluate passengers' likelihood to pay for this service (should the Trial not be extended) on their next visit to Heathrow, at around £20.00\* per entry.

## Methodology

It is anticipated that a mixed on-airport methodology approach will be required, consisting of a Quantitative research survey AND Qualitative research mini-depth interviews.

For the Quantitative survey a short face-to-face interview of 3-4 minutes is envisaged as an intercept after pax have passed through the FT Passport Control Desk. With some of these pax likely to be in a hurry, it may well be that the interviewers may need to walk & talk through to the Baggage reclaim with these respondents.

A separate Qualitative research brief is being shared with Caroline Thompson to cover interviews not only with passengers who have come through the Fast Track Lane, but also amongst the Ethos Farm Heathrow Helpers who are hosting the service.

## Sample

The target for this study is the Priority passengers who have been given a voucher with which to access the Fast Track Passport Control service. This should exclude those who have a biometric passport from key partner countries which would allow them to utilise the E-gates.

We need to spread the research fieldwork across the 3-month trial period in all 3 terminals, giving coverage of the full trial working hours (06.30-22.00 hrs), with an appropriate representation of day parts and days of the week.

We are open to a recommendation on sample size (overall and by terminal) and the number of shifts that would thus be necessary to complete the project.

\* We recommend adding a potential fee, even though a specific amount has not yet been agreed