

Flybe: Regional carrier ceases trading and cancels all flights

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FLYBE

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Airline Flybe has cancelled all flights to and from the UK after going into administration.

A statement on the airline's website said it had "ceased trading" and told any passengers expecting to travel with it not to go to the airport.

About 2,500 passengers were due to fly with Flybe on Saturday, with about 75,000 passengers in total having flights cancelled.

Flybe's administrator confirmed 277 of its 321 staff are being made redundant.

Financial advisory firm Interpath said the rest of the company's staff would be retained.

Flybe said it would not be able to help passengers arrange alternative flights.

The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said it would provide advice and information to those affected.

Administrators have taken over the company, which only relaunched in April last year.

- [Passenger frustration as airline cancels all flights](#)
- [Cornwall flights cancellations 'a shock'](#)

In March 2020, it announced it would cease trading, citing the coronavirus pandemic as a contributory factor.

The company was rescued after being bought by Thyme Opco, a firm linked to US hedge fund Cyrus Capital and subsequently renamed Flybe Limited.

The airline **resumed operations** with a plan to operate up to 530 flights per week across 23 routes.

Until the most recent collapse, Flybe operated flights on 21 routes from Belfast City, Birmingham, and Heathrow to airports across the UK as well as to Amsterdam and Geneva.

What to do if your flight is cancelled

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the body which oversees air travel in the UK, has issued advice to customers:

- Those who booked directly with Flybe with a credit, debit, or charge card should contact their card provider for a potential refund
- Card providers may ask for a "negative response" letter, proving the status of the airline. This will be published on the website **of the CAA**
- The CAA may launch an operation to repatriate stranded passengers, but this has not been announced yet, but it is worth checking their website
- Customers who booked their flights as part of a package deal with a travel agent may be ATOL-protected and are advised to speak to their agent
- Most Flybe bookings are not part of a package holiday and are unlikely to be ATOL-protected, but may still be covered through travel insurance if it covers scheduled airline failure
- For further information customers are advised to contact flybecustomers@interpathadvisory.com

A statement published on the **Flybe website** early on Saturday said the High Court had appointed joint administrators for Flybe Limited.

"Flybe has now ceased trading and all flights from and to the UK operated by Flybe have been cancelled and will not be rescheduled," it read.

"If you are due to fly with Flybe today [Saturday] or in the future, please do not travel to the airport unless you have arranged an alternative flight with another airline."

It added that anyone who had booked a flight with the airline via an intermediary should contact that intermediary directly.

One passenger who was due to take a Flybe service this morning was Chris Donnelly, who was scheduled to fly **from Belfast City to Heathrow at 07:25 GMT**.

At 03:07 he received an email from Flybe which stated his flight had been cancelled and the company had gone into administration, advising passengers not to travel to the airport.

Mr Donnelly, a school principal and political commentator, was on his way to the airport when he saw the email.



Chris Donnelly was on the way to the airport when he read an email about his cancelled Flybe flight

He was able to book an alternative flight from Belfast to Gatwick, but doing so at short notice was inconvenient.

He added that he had booked train tickets from Heathrow into central London costing £50, which were of no use to him now.

Sophie Levy is in the Royal Navy, and flew with Flybe on Friday from Newquay to Heathrow, with a return flight scheduled for Sunday - but since cancelled.

She said she is under pressure to get back to her base at RNAS Culdrose on Sunday for a promotional course.

"I will now be getting a train at short notice that will put me out of pocket," she said.

"My relaxing weekend turned out to be manic."

Freddy McBride, 61, from Balham in south London, was due to fly with his wife from Heathrow to Belfast on Saturday morning but had to rebook with Aer Lingus.

"I got up at six and left the house before seven. I got to Hatton Central and I checked my email and it says they've gone into administration. It's just outrageous," he said.

Matthew Hall, chief executive of Belfast City Airport, which has the highest number of Flybe staff in the UK, with dozens of employees, said his thoughts were "with Flybe employees and passengers".

He said anyone booked onto Flybe flights should not travel to the airport, and eight of its 10 Flybe routes were covered by other providers.

'How are they making a profit?'

The airline also flew from Cornwall, with routes from Newquay to London Gatwick and Manchester.

Louis Gardner, economy leader for Cornwall Council, **said the news had come as a "real shock"** and efforts would be made to find other providers for the routes.

Seamus McCoy, who used Flybe regularly to travel between Newquay and London, told BBC Radio Cornwall: "Every time I've flown, I've always thought: 'How are they making a profit?' because the planes have never been more than 50% full."

CAA consumer director Paul Smith said: "It is always sad to see an airline enter administration and we know that Flybe's decision to stop trading will be distressing for all of its employees and customers."

"For the latest advice, Flybe customers should visit the **Civil Aviation Authority's website** or our Twitter feed for more information."

The government said its "immediate priority" would be to support anyone trying to get home and Flybe staff who have lost their jobs.

"This remains a challenging environment for airlines, both old and new, as they recover from the pandemic, and we understand the impact this will have on Flybe's passengers and staff," it said.

It said most destinations served by Flybe in the UK were accessible through alternative means of transportation.

The Independent's travel correspondent Simon Calder told BBC Radio 4's Today that while customers should get a refund, finding alternative flights may be a problem: "They are going to be more expensive than the ones they originally bought with Flybe," he said.

He said while there had been a recent surge in demand for air travel, Flybe had "fairly thin pickings" of travel routes when it returned to operation, and had struggled with passenger loads on its flights.