

## **George Best Belfast City Airport**

### **Record of Decision on Delayed Aircraft after 9.30pm**

Date Information Supplied: 29/01/2026

Months Covered: November and December 2025

Was information adequate to assess compliance? Yes

Was any clarification required? No

#### Consideration of Reasons for Delayed Aircraft

##### **Types of reasons**

There were 43 extensions over the two months, 14 in November and 29 in December. 93% or 40 of the extensions were arrivals and 7% or 3 were departures after 9.30pm.

Explanations for the extensions included issues such as aircraft rotation, commercial publicity/passenger convenience, this was due an ill passenger being offload from the flight, and technical issues with the aircraft. 39 of the extensions were recorded as reactionary, i.e. due to aircraft rotation and the late arrival of aircraft from another flight or previous sector. These earlier delays were caused by a range of issues including facility faults at departing airports, knock on from earlier tech issues, late boarding of crew (flight deck or cabin), slow boarding and deboarding of passengers with reduced mobility and shortage of ground staff. There were 7 delays recorded without a secondary reason provided.

There were 11 delays on the Edinburgh route, 10 delays on the Birmingham route, 7 delays on the Manchester route, 5 delays on the route from Leeds Bradford, 3 on the Southampton route, the Glasgow route had 2 delays, 1 delay on the Cardiff route, 1 delay on the London City route, 1 delay on the London Heathrow route, and London Gatwick had 1 delay. 39 of these delays were from Aer Lingus/Emerald Airlines, 2 of these were from British Airways and 1 of the delays was from EasyJet.

24 (55.8%) of extensions occurred before 22:00 and between 22:00 and 23:00 there were 17 (39.5%). 2 flights operated after 23:00 and before 23:59. In the months of November and December there were 2 refusals. Flights after 23:00 have had an increase in 2025 and flights refused in 2025 have decreased compared to 2024 and 2023. In 2025 there were 29 flights after 23:00 and 12 refusals. In 2024 the number of flights after 23:00 was 19 and 29 refusals. In 2023 the number of flights after 23:00 was 4 which is significantly lower than 2024 and 2025. There were 41 flights refused in 2023.

These figures are lower than the number of extensions experienced in the same months in 2024 (15 in November and 30 in December). Extensions represented 0.88% of movements compared with 0.95% last year. The average extension length was 31.5 minutes (compared with 35.5 minutes last year); 55.8% of extensions were less than 30 minutes (55.6% last year). There were extensions on 70.5% of nights (43 out of 61) compared with 32.8% (20 out of 61) last year.

##### **Do These Reasons Meet the Exceptional Circumstances Test and the Department Guidance?**

Yes – these delays relate to, aircraft rotation, technical issues and operational problems at other airports and with airlines and reactionary delays beyond the airport's control. They are considered exceptional in accordance with the Department's guidance.

Is there a need for further action?

**Yes- Agreed to issue correspondence to GBBCA regarding; the continued number of flight extensions on the Edinburgh and Birmingham routes, flights without secondary reasons provided, the increased number of flights after 23:00 and the decreased number in flight refusals compared to previous years.**

Signed: 1. [REDACTED]  
2. [REDACTED]  
3. [REDACTED]

Date: 25/02/2026

Discussed and above record agreed at RPP&C group meeting