



Royal and Ministerial Air Travel Project

Introduction

Every year members of the royal family and senior government ministers undertake a number of journeys by air in support of Government business and to support a wide range of public engagements. The large majority of that travel is by road, rail and scheduled flights.

However, a significant number of royal and ministerial journeys require the use of special, non-scheduled air travel, for reasons of security and to meet business needs. For example, the Queen and Prime Minister require special flights due to security restrictions. Furthermore, many other flights, particularly those overseas involving visits to a number of locations, do not fit in with regular airline schedules.

Non-scheduled travel for the royal family and senior ministers is provided primarily by [32 \(The Royal\) Squadron](#) of the RAF. Where RAF planes are unavailable, additional capacity is provided by the charter market. Due to increased operational demands for 32 (The Royal) Squadron, users have had to place greater reliance on the charter market in recent years.

In 2004, Sir Peter Gershon was invited to review air travel arrangements for the royal family and government ministers. [His report](#) was published in June 2006. The report found that the existing arrangements were fragmented, fell short, at times, of the levels of safety, security and reliability required for VIP users, and did not always achieve value for money. His recommendations included the establishment of a new one-stop air travel service providing a dedicated aircraft service as well as access to more formalised arrangements with the charter market.

A team was established within the Department for Transport to implement the recommendations of Sir Peter Gershon's review relating to the establishment of a new air travel service. That work has now been completed and on 26 March 2008, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Jim Fitzpatrick MP, made a [statement to Parliament](#) detailing the findings and recommendations of that work.

Links to related web pages

[Explanation of air travel by members of the Royal Family.](#)

For related documents, pages and internet links, see the column on the [right](#).