"I SPENT MY 30TH BIRTHDAY AT GATWICK"

News / Airlines, Airports / Routes

Passengers today told of their fury after being caught up in delays of up to 25 hours at Gatwick Airport this weekend.

One claimed he was almost forced to cancel his wedding while another woman had to spend her 30th birthday at the airport due to delays between London and New York.

Holidaymakers were left stuck for hours in both the capital and New York after flights were grounded by technical problems.

Chris Seddon missed a friend's wedding after his flight eventually arrived into New York more than a day late.

He said: "I felt pretty helpless. The most annoying thing was the lack of contact or announcements, no updates.

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"I'd paid for a nice hotel as well. Plus the last few days I've been pretty tired due to the lack of sleep."

And the flight delays almost caused Shane Kelly to miss his own wedding.

In a message to Norwegian Airlines, which was affected by the problems, he wrote: "I can't believe how badly you treat you customers. Flight cancelled from Gatwick may cause me to cancel our wedding."

Kerrie Sheridan from Ewell in Epsom had saved for months to take the trip to New York for her 30th birthday.

She said that while she can forgive the airline having technical problems, she criticised a lack of communication from staff at the airline.

She said: "No-one told us what was happening and we were kept at the airport for most of the night. I understand technical faults [but] what I cannot reconcile is that no-one could give us any update. Even Norwegian's call centre, which I had to call Norway over three times to get hold of, could only give conflicting information.

"The only answers I got were apologies over social media and a string of delayed text messages - there were some elderly and didn't use texts or social media.

"Some didn't have internet access as they were from the U.S.

"I cannot believe that a company can treat its customers so badly and leave us over 22 hours delayed with no real updates and no one taking ownership.

"Since arriving I also have not received an email or anything by way of apology - only generic messages on Twitter."

Passengers were also stranded in New York, waiting for a plane from London to bring them home.

Chelsea Halkou was returning home from a three-month stint at Camp America.

The 19-year-old, from Sutton, said: "We were stuck in New York for 25 hours, they said one thing and then another, we didn't know what was going on."

"It was a bit of a rubbish end to a good trip, after three months away I just wanted to get home."

A spokeswoman for Norwegian said: "Norwegian would like to apologise to passengers affected by delays from London Gatwick over the weekend, this was the result of a technical issue with an aircraft on Friday which severely impacted the flying schedule."

"Safety is always our priority and while our own aircraft was undergoing maintenance we took the decision to lease an alternative aircraft in order to continue to operate flights. This has resulted in subsequent delays on flights to and from America, and we are working hard to resolve this."

"Norwegian would like to sincerely apologise to those affected, and is helping customers continue their journey by trying to rebook their seat on an alternative departure or sourcing tickets with other airlines. Norwegian has provided customers with meal vouchers and will refund accommodation costs incurred during the delays in addition to refunding any passengers who chose not to fly. Passengers affected by the delays will receive regular text updates as well being able to access

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live information about their departure on the Norwegian website."

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