Getting to and from UK airports is difficult and expensive, according to new research by Railfuture and Bus Users UK (BUUK). Their report, released today, highlights problems such as buying tickets for international rail journeys and public transport links to airports. "We don't always need major infrastructure projects to improve our airports links." Said Chris Brown, who compiled the report "Sometimes better signage and other information, or rolling stock with more luggage space will make a difference, not only to British people flying abroad but - just as importantly - for visitors to our country."

"For some journeys, particularly to destinations outside Europe, there is no realistic alternative to air travel, which is why we've produced this report. We found a number of problems that concern us"

"One of the big problems we found is the lack of 24-hour access to airports, as trains don't run all day and all night. The train operating companies are are not very good at promoting their connections to airports, and cuts to bus services have meant that the vital last link in the journey is missing, meaning that people feel that they might as well drive all away to the airport.

"It should be made easy for visitors to our country to continue by public transport when they land. At some airport stations, the range of destinations to which tickets could be purchased is very restricted at Heathrow, for example, rail tickets are available only to London"

"Fares to airports are not always attractive. We appreciate that cheap fares may not be available on a crowded commuter train, but more thought must be given to this issue by the Train Operating Companies

"Some rolling stock is not ideal for airport links, because of shortage of luggage space"

"But it's not all bad: we found that the airports provide good information about their transport links, and the Transport for London website provides good information on how to get to London airports."

The report offers a number of recommendations, such as train operating companies providing improved information, and advocates further research on the needs of airport workers. The report will be made available to the manager of each airport surveyed, to train operators who serve airports, and to relevant politicians.

Notes to editors:

The report "Public Transport Links to UK Airports 2012" can be downloaded at http://www.railfuture.org.uk/dl445

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for both passengers and freight.
Railfuture's website can be found at: http://www.railfuture.org.uk

Bus Users UK is an independent group which was formed to give bus passengers a voice.
http://www.bususers.org/

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Two questionnaires were distributed to Railfuture branches and BUUK . The first was aimed at anyone who has recently travelled to or through an airport. It requested the name of the airport visited and asked whether the purpose was to be an air passenger, meeting a passenger or working at or near an airport. The second was a Railfuture branch survey. Copies were sent to each branch for completion by a branch representative. This covered public transport provision at the airport and the provision of relevant public transport information.

The questionnaires were available for three months up to August 31 to include any journeys made in the 12 months up to that date.

197 replies were received covering 24 airports. These range from Stornoway and Inverness in the north to Exeter in the south. Stornoway and Belfast City were the only ones not on the British mainland. The report lists each airport which was investigated and includes a summary of the findings on each of them, including number of replies submitted about that airport. The most popular airport was London Heathrow with 37 replies received.