

## **Weighty problem taken off passengers' shoulders**

Weigh Ahead is proud to announce the installment of two innovative 'patented' pre-check in luggage weighing systems at Newcastle International Airport.

For just £1 passengers can now check the weight of their luggage before they check-in. This highly sophisticated weighing machine will inform passengers whether their baggage is under or over the agreed limit as set by their airline.

Weigh Ahead is based in North Shields and has been pioneered in the North East, using the region's manufacturing skills to help design and bring this idea to life. And there really is no better place for the first installment of this cutting edge technology than at the main airport for the region where the idea was first dreamt up.

Carole Stewart, commercial development director of Weigh Ahead said: "Being a frequent flyer to Spain from Newcastle International for many years, my husband and I saw first-hand the stressful scenes at the airport check-in over baggage allowances. It was this that made us think that a solution was needed. "We are really delighted at the support and encouragement we have had from the North East. In the development phase we have to thank Business Link, the North East England Investment Centre and Alan Campbell MP for their advice and funding support, while North Tyneside Council named us: 'North Tyneside Business Start-up Company' for 2009.

"We felt it was vital to work with and offer our service to our home airport, Newcastle International. It is a huge plus to our business and all the businesses operating in our regional airport. We have been delighted with the response from the airport especially the support from David Laws who is truly a champion of the region."

Gerard Stewart, Managing Director added, "To use an Air phrase, "It has been a long haul". However, our aim was to produce an innovative system for Airports and passengers. From day one we aimed at launching in our home city of Newcastle to promote our business from the North East. I am extremely proud of our associations coupled with all the sacrifices that have been made in achieving our goal".

The Weigh Ahead system also allows passengers a second chance to weigh their bags after weight redistribution, free of charge. Additionally the company has even come up with a solution to passengers discarding items rather than paying the excess demanded by their airline. A cabin-compliant foldaway flight bag is also sold from a vending unit near to the weighing system, making sure Newcastle International's passengers have the space for any beach towels, flip flops or sun cream.

David Laws, chief executive of Newcastle International said: "We are delighted that Weigh Ahead, a north east based company, has come up with a solution to one of the headaches many of our passengers face, particularly when packing for summer holidays and long trips away.

"Not only is Weigh Ahead providing our customers with a useful and potentially money-saving service, but they will also help minimise queues at check-in, as well as the security implications associated with discarded excess luggage.

"We look forward to a long working relationship with Weigh Ahead and to further improving customer service at Newcastle International."

Councillor Jonjo Macnamara, North Tyneside Council's Cabinet member for Development said: "It's fantastic to see businesses whom we have supported as a council achieve their ambition and see their innovations taken up.

"Carole and Ged have worked very hard, with the support of our business team to take an idea and transform it into a real product which is causing great excitement in the travel industry. I'm sure it will be a boon to both travelers and airports."

Alan Campbell MP said: "This is a fantastic innovatory scheme, good news for Newcastle Airport but also with benefits for other airports. Thousands of families from our area fly out of Newcastle Airport every year and with stricter limits on baggage from a number of airlines, the cost of getting your allowances wrong can be high. Hopefully this will end the scenes of rapidly unpacking cases and having to pay excess. I want to congratulate Ged and Carole for all their hard work!"

Alastair MacColl, chief executive of Business & Enterprise North East, the organisation that runs the Business Link service in the region, said, "Weigh Ahead is a business with great potential and some fantastically innovative products. Newcastle International Airport is a business that I know relentlessly invests in the quality of their customer service. It's a great match and I'm sure this new initiative will be extremely successful. Business Link will be on hand to continue offering support wherever it can".