

CAA Consumer Panel

Annual Report 2018-2019



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About the CAA Consumer Panel

The CAA Consumer Panel (the Panel) is a non-statutory body providing expert advice to make sure that the consumer interest remains central to CAA policy development. The Panel acts as a critical friend helping the CAA to understand fully, and take account of, the interests of current and potential aviation consumers.

The Panel makes use of existing CAA research to understand the aviation consumer experience and may request that the CAA undertakes new targeted research and gathers specific intelligence. In addition, the Panel provides the CAA with feedback from a consumer perspective on the effectiveness of its policies and practices.

Chair's Foreword

In 2018-19 we welcomed a number of new members to the Panel who have brought a wide variety of expertise. We have been joined by Jacqueline Minor, David Thomas and Carol Brennan whose biographies are at the back of this report. Their expertise has enabled us to contribute to the CAA's work in areas including economic regulation of NATS, considering the impact of Brexit on passengers and the CAA's Aviation Consumer Survey.

We have continued to deliver our workplan, holding a successful complaint handling workshop with a large number of representatives from across the aviation sector, and we have continued to meet regularly with airlines, airports and other sector bodies to discuss a wide range of consumer issues.

We are proud of the role we have been able to play in contributing to the DfT's thinking on the consumer elements of the Aviation Strategy and we look forward to continuing this work to help ensure the success of the proposals contained in the green paper.

We have built constructive and positive relationships with industry, Government, the CAA and other Consumer Panels to inform our work and enable us to represent the interests of consumers in aviation. We look forward to continuing this work in the year to come.



Jenny Willott

CAA Consumer Panel Chair

Chapter 1

Aims and Ambition

The Panel believes strongly in an aviation market and regulatory regime that has the needs of consumers at its heart. This means:

- effective airline competition on price and service quality;
- airports providing an affordable, good quality and consumer focused service; and
- empowered consumers making informed decisions about which companies to use.

When things go wrong, or adjustments are needed, the industry also needs to respond to meet the needs of all users. This means:

- airline services and airport environments designed and delivered to ensure accessibility to everyone;
- people who may need extra help supported to make sure they can effectively access the market; and
- consumers having quick, fair and easy access to redress if and when things go wrong.

The work of the Panel is grouped under the following strategic themes, which capture what we believe consumers need from the aviation sector and its regulator.

Access: The experiences and needs of consumers at risk of vulnerability are well understood and taken into account in the design and delivery of services. Everybody who wants to do so is able to access the market and has a good experience when they do so.

Quality: Airlines compete on both price and service quality, and consumers are able to make easy and accurate comparisons. Airports provide transparency about service quality. Digital innovation is harnessed to positive effect for consumers. Information is transparent and easily available, including in formats that can be used by third parties to give effective advice and make accurate comparisons.

Redress: When things do go wrong consumers should have quick, fair and easy access to redress, with equitable outcomes. Both airlines and airports use consumer complaints to learn lessons and improve service quality and provision. This will make things better for everybody, including those who do not complain. Reform of airline insolvency arrangements should be cognisant of consumer needs and ensure consumers are adequately protected.

Through its role as the voice for consumers in aviation regulation the Panel aims to use its relationship with the CAA to forward this agenda, to encourage the CAA to be ambitious when addressing the needs of consumers and to ensure that the work of the Panel is focussed where it can have the greatest impact.