



Consumers and Markets Group

Guidance to Industry – 25th June 2024

The Civil Aviation Authority was sorry to learn that so many consumers experienced flight delays and cancellations because of the power cut at Manchester Airport on Sunday 23 June 2024.

When flights are delayed and cancelled, we expect airlines to minimise the overall impact on passengers by keeping them informed, looking after them, and advising them of their rights. Passengers whose flights have been cancelled should be offered the choice of a refund, re-routing at the earliest opportunity or re-routing at a later date. Passengers whose flights are delayed, and those awaiting replacement flights, should be looked after and provided with meals, refreshments and hotel accommodation proportionate to the length of the delay. Particular attention should be given to those who require special assistance, and passengers who are vulnerable or require more practical assistance.

During periods of mass disruption, it can be challenging for airlines to provide the level of care and assistance that we or they would like. When airlines are unable to proactively offer care, or offer suitable replacement flights, we expect them to promptly reimburse passengers for the reasonable costs they incur making their own arrangements.

Although we recognise the adverse impacts delays and cancellations have on passengers, it is likely that the disruptions directly caused by the power cut at Manchester Airport are likely to be viewed as “extraordinary circumstances”. As a result, passengers are unlikely to be entitled to fixed sum compensation. This does not affect their entitlement to replacement flights and care, as explained above.

Notes: The Civil Aviation Authority’s interpretation of extraordinary circumstances is illustrative and for guidance only, rather than determinative of our view in any specific case that may arise. Each case will be context and fact specific. This does not mean that a passenger or group of passengers cannot try and claim compensation, including through the courts, if they disagree with the Civil Aviation Authority’s interpretation.