

[REDACTED]

Date: 10 January 2024
Reference: F0006664

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request of 9 January 2024, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). For reference your original enquiry was as follows:

- 1. Does the CAA accept that separating family groups on commercial flights increases risks?*
- 2. Does the CAA accept that the CAA are responsible for regulating airline policy decisions on the seating of passengers?*
- 3. Has the CAA taken enforcement action against any airline on the safety of their family group seating policies.*

Your request has been considered in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I can confirm that the CAA holds some information within scope of the above enquiry; if I may I shall address each of your points in turn:

1. Does the CAA accept that separating family groups on commercial flights increases risks?
The CAA makes it absolutely clear that the seating of children close by their parents or guardians should be the aim of airline seat allocation procedures for family groups and large parties of children. The risk of separated family members slowing down an emergency evacuation are well established.

2. Does the CAA accept that the CAA are responsible for regulating airline policy decisions on the seating of passengers?

The CAA has published guidance for UK airlines relating to the seating of family groups which it expects them to comply with, unless there is a compelling reason why they cannot comply. It is important to understand that it is not a specific legal requirement for airlines to ensure family groups are seated together.

Please note it is the further the CAA's positions that elements one and two fall outside the remit of the FOIA as they do not constitute a request for held recorded information. Responses are being provided here for the sake of completeness.

3. Has the CAA taken enforcement action against any airline on the safety of their family group seating policies.

Following a review of held information it has been determined that none such enforcement action has been taken by the CAA.

Civil Aviation Authority

Aviation House, Beehive Ring Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH6 0YR. www.caa.co.uk

Email: foi.requests@caa.co.uk

It may, for background, be helpful if I provide the following additional information. The CAA recently provided some information on our work on this topic as part of our response to the recent government consultation on price transparency. The CAA's response to this consultation can be found here:

[CAA response to government consultation on improving price transparency and product information for consumers](#)– paragraph 4 is relevant.

We also provide guidance on family seating on our website:

Airline seating allocations | Civil Aviation Authority (caa.co.uk) (the paragraph under “families, children and infants”).

If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you should approach the CAA in writing at:-

FOI.Requests@caa.co.uk

The CAA has a formal internal review process for dealing with appeals or complaints in connection with Freedom of Information requests. The key steps in this process are set out below. A request for an internal review should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under Section 50 of the FOIA to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner at:-

Information Commissioner's Office
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF
<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

If you wish to request further information from the CAA, please use the form on the CAA website at <http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?appid=24>.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team
Information Rights Specialist

CAA INTERNAL REVIEW & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- The original case to which the appeal or complaint relates is identified and the case file is made available;
- The appeal or complaint is allocated to an Appeal Manager, the appeal is acknowledged and the details of the Appeal Manager are provided to the applicant;
- The Appeal Manager reviews the case to understand the nature of the appeal or complaint, reviews the actions and decisions taken in connection with the original case and takes account of any new information that may have been received. This

will typically require contact with those persons involved in the original case and consultation with the CAA Legal Department;

- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and with the CAA Legal Department, agrees on the course of action to be taken;
- The Appeal Manager prepares the necessary response and collates any information to be provided to the applicant;
- The response and any necessary information is sent to the applicant, together with information about further rights of appeal to the Information Commissioners Office, including full contact details.