



Consumers and Markets Group

Guidance to Industry – 19 July 2024

The Civil Aviation Authority is aware that a global IT issue is currently affecting numerous businesses around the world including airlines, airports, and airline handling agents. Unfortunately, it is likely that this will cause some flights to be delayed or cancelled.

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.

Cancelled flights

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.

We understand that re-routing passengers can sometimes be challenging during periods of major disruption and that airlines may not always be able to get passengers to their destination as quickly as any of us would like. Nevertheless, we urge airlines to do all they can to re-route their passengers and to update them as often as they can.

Delayed passengers

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.

When airlines are unable to proactively offer suitable replacement flights, or care, we expect them to promptly reimburse passengers for the reasonable costs they incur making their own arrangements.

Fixed sum compensation

Although we recognise the adverse impacts delays and cancellations have on passengers, the disruptions directly caused by the global IT issue 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 set out 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.

The protections set out above are based on Assimilated Regulation 261/2004 and Regulation (EC) 261/2004 which collectively apply to all flights departing from the UK, and flights arriving into the UK on UK and EU carriers. Different rights may apply to passengers arriving on flights to the UK operated by non-EU carriers such as flights from the USA on US carriers.