

CONSUMER STRATEGY

CAA CONSUMER STRATEGY

The [CAA's strategy](#) sets out the overarching aims for our regulatory activities, detailing our organisational aspirations and future direction that will help us meet the challenges and opportunities that we and our stakeholders face. To help realise these ambitions, we have devised a **consumer strategy** to further articulate our role to consumers and set out our priority focus areas for our consumer work.

This consumer strategy outlines our vision for the role of the CAA in the consumer landscape, sets out how we employ our regulatory principles in the delivery of this vision and explains how we will make the most of the resources available to us to promote **choice, value and fair treatment** for existing and future aviation consumers and users of aviation services.

This is an agile document, open to stakeholder scrutiny and subject to change if, and when, the regulatory or operational environment requires it. It sets out our expectation for how consumers should be treated in the aviation market and details where we can influence this through our regulatory powers and duties and where we will use other tools available including the expertise we have gathered and the information we hold to deliver benefits for consumers.

We have created a mission, vision and purpose specifically for aviation consumers and set out our strategic focus areas through which we aim to deliver the CAA strategic aim to improve aviation for consumers.

Generally, the CAA considers a consumer to be a paying customer (passenger or freight) of an entity that we regulate and for whom we have a regulatory function related to how the customer is treated. For the purpose of this strategy, we use “**consumers**” to mean **those who book and travel on commercial airlines from the UK, who are the main beneficiaries of our consumer protection and economic regulatory functions.**



In devising this consumer strategy, we have considered how the CAA makes use of the [consumer principles](#). This is a list of well-established concepts used by consumer policy professionals as a way for organisations to think about the consumer interest in a structured way. The CAA's Consumer Panel have published how it believes these principles apply in aviation and how they provide a useful framework for the CAA's work in relation to consumers. To demonstrate our adherence to this framework, we have identified the relevant principles against our planned actions throughout this document. This is included in coloured text (in brackets) on the relevant pages.

CONSUMER CHOICE, VALUE AND FAIR TREATMENT



The CAA understands that unlike for some other regulated sectors, aviation consumers generally benefit from high levels of competition, with most air travellers able to pick an airline to fly with and, for some, the airport they will travel from. Whilst this serves to drive choice and value, as aviation businesses seek to differentiate themselves from their rivals through the services they provide and price they charge, there are occasions when this is not enough to ensure fair treatment of consumers.

There can also be different levels of competition and choice on certain routes or in different regions of the UK making consumer protections essential to promote fair commercial practices.

The purpose of the CAA in these scenarios is to ensure that consumers fully benefit from the statutory rights that exist to protect them.

- We provide **oversight and enforcement of consumer rights** to help deliver high standards of consumer protection, including air passenger rights and financial protection against the insolvency of tour operators.
- We **uphold consumer choice, value and fair treatment** through the enforcement of consumer rights and our economic regulation function.
- We are **committed to considering the consumer interest across all our regulatory functions**, aided by the oversight provided by our Consumer Panel.

By doing this, the CAA will fulfil its **mission** to provide effective statutory consumer protection, lead improvements in accessibility and further the interests of users of air transport when fulfilling our regulatory duties.

This in turn will help us achieve our **vision** for the UK to have a competitive aviation market where consumers have access to a choice of services, are informed enough to make the most of the choices available, have confidence that businesses will meet their obligations if things go wrong and are empowered to challenge them if they don't.

In delivering this strategy, we will be **guided by our regulatory principles** and the **public sector equality duty** in making independent regulatory decisions to deliver on our vision, acting within the legislative and policy framework set by Parliament and Government. We will be proactive in the use of our existing powers and will investigate emerging consumer issues as a matter of priority.

The CAA also has a clear set of values that encapsulate our culture and drive our actions. These show how we take our responsibilities seriously and hold ourselves to the highest standards as we seek to: **do the right thing**; that we are always open to challenge as we **never stop learning**; we make the most of our relationships with consumer bodies, regulator colleagues, Government departments and stakeholders as we **build collaborative relationships**; and finally, one of the most important principles for delivering improvements for consumers, that we **respect everyone**.

CONSUMER PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

To achieve our vision, and in line with the mission and purpose identified above, we have identified 5 key focus areas where our actions demonstrate our commitment to consumers. These are to:

➤ **Promote improvements for consumers in vulnerable circumstances**

Our goal: We understand how the aviation environment creates vulnerability and effectively enforce consumer rights that protect and promote fair access to air travel.

➤ **Improve routine compliance with consumer protection legislation**

Our goal: There is routine compliance across the industry with air passenger rights, ATOL regulations and consumer legislation.

➤ **Empower consumers to take full advantage of the competitive market**

Our goal: Consumers are provided with clear and accurate online advice and industry information via the CAA's website and have access to an effective complaints escalation services.

➤ **Further the interests of consumers in competition and growth**

Our goal: Industry is incentivised to deliver value for money for consumers, and to pursue growth and promote competition, with reference to environmental sustainability where appropriate, taking into account the trade-offs and value that different consumers place on different aspects of the market.

➤ **Embed the consumer interest in CAA governance structures and policy development**

Our goal: The interests of consumers is clearly understood and considered in policy development across the CAA, with challenge provided by the CAA's Consumer Panel.

PROMOTE IMPROVEMENTS FOR CONSUMERS IN VULNERABLE CIRCUMSTANCES

We want everyone to have fair access to air travel and aim to use our regulatory role and influence to minimise factors that can lead to aviation consumers experiencing vulnerability.

With help from the Consumer Panel, we have been developing our understanding of how the aviation environment can create vulnerability (see slide 12 for definition). Where this is a result of the physical environment, we work with industry to promote special assistance and improve the consistency of the service available for disabled passengers or passengers with reduced mobility, whose rights are protected by law.

Our primary way of achieving this is through holding industry to account for meeting the minimum standards that all passengers should be able to rely on, as well as identifying good practices as a model for others to follow.

We will also consider the extent to which innovation can help, looking at

developments in equipment and technology, and challenging ourselves to lead by example when communicating with consumers.

We will continue to pursue this through our relationship with Government and other parties in a position to influence standards and deliver enhanced legal powers.

We will review our focus areas regularly to capture emerging issues and to consider where the CAA is best placed to deliver improvements across the industry, potentially considering subjects such as non-visible disabilities provision and experiences of aviation security.



Ongoing Commitment

- Maintain high service standards and drive appropriate corporate accountability at UK airports through our regular airport accessibility framework reporting
- Continue to work with those with lived experience so that our work delivers real life benefits

Immediate Focus

- Implement an accessibility framework for airlines to mimic the improvements delivered by the airports' accessibility framework
- Consider how to prioritise vulnerability in the enforcement work that we undertake following travel disruption

Long Term Ambition

- Vulnerability is understood across CAA functions through the continued promotion of our vulnerability toolkit

Understanding how the aviation environment creates vulnerability and taking actions to protect the consumer from this demonstrates the CAA's commitment to the consumer principles of **access, fairness and equity** and **representation**.

IMPROVE ROUTINE COMPLIANCE WITH CONSUMER PROTECTION LEGISLATION

We want consumers to feel confident to book air travel knowing that businesses will treat them fairly and that help is available if things go wrong.

The operational realities of air travel mean that some flights will unfortunately be affected by disruption and some consumers will be impacted by tour operator insolvency.

When this occurs, there are protections in place to minimise the impacts on passengers. The CAA has a key role in enforcing the legal obligations around disruption management, accessibility and for the financial protection of flight-inclusive package holidays (ATOL).

We will use our relationship with industry to seek improvements that minimise the stress and inconvenience that can occur, seeking widespread and comprehensive compliance with the law.

For ATOL, we will also seek to deliver reforms to reduce the obstacles that have delayed consumer refunds in the past.

We will do more to optimise the use of our current consumer protection powers

to achieve swifter resolutions to enforcement activity when seeking to address collective harm, learning from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), experts on our Consumer Panel and others with knowledge and experience in this area.

We also have the power along with the CMA, to enforce general consumer law designed to promote transparency and fairness in commercial practices such as the booking process and contract terms. Pre-pandemic, we had some successes in promoting best practice in relation to these laws and will look to see how we can continue to do so when resources allows.

All International Arrivals				Which Hall?
07:40	Dublin	EI3250	Bags in Hall	1
08:05	Newark N Y C	UA036	Expected 09:11	1
08:20	Dublin	FR814	On Approach	1
08:25	Amsterdam	KL1277	On Approach	2
08:25	Chicago O'hare	UA118	On Approach	1
08:35	Boston	DL122	Arrived	1
09:05	Dublin	EI350		1
10:05	Athens	A3632		2
10:05	New York J F K	DL208	Expected 09:30	2
10:05	Brussels Charleroi	FR7323		1
10:10	Munich	LH2524	Expected 10:13	1
10:15	Paris Beauvais	FR5592		1

Ongoing Commitment

- Proactively educate, enforce, and oversee compliance with air passenger rights legislation, based on clear evidence and focussed where we can have the greatest impacts.

Immediate Focus

- Fully exploit the legal levers available to us, and work with other agencies to develop our skills in using the powers available to the CAA. Act where we feel this will bring the greatest benefits for consumers.

Long Term Ambition

- Maintain an efficient and effective consumer protection regime, looking at innovative ways to deliver widespread compliance.
- Delivery of ATOL reform

By seeking routine compliance with the key consumer protections that exist for air passengers, we will be applying the consumer principles to **protect the economic interests**, promote **fairness and equity** and promote access to **redress**, which are the main drivers of these laws.

EMPOWER CONSUMERS TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE COMPETITIVE MARKET

We want consumers to have access to good, reliable information to help them make the right booking decisions for them, to know what their rights are when travelling by air and to have access to effective mechanisms to help access those rights.

We have big ambitions for how we can provide guidance and advice for consumers on their rights through improvements to our website. We will be considering how best to present and promote our knowledge and information so that the CAA is seen as a reliable source of good, clear, accessible consumer advice with input from aviation consumers to improve the user experience.

This also provides an opportunity to reflect on how we use the industry data that we hold and consider where and how we can share our insights for the benefit of consumers. Such data includes Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) data and regular surveys of departing passengers.

We will continue to seek mandatory ADR for aviation and to influence the design of any compulsory arrangements: balancing the needs and demands of all stakeholders. In the meantime, we will work to identify and understand where the existing voluntary arrangements could be improved and seek to influence necessary change.

The CAA's [environmental sustainability strategy](#) also sets out our ongoing work on reporting environmental data. We are also considering the best way to calculate the environmental impact of aviation emissions (being mindful of international work in this area) and provide that information to consumers in a useful, accurate, comparable and accessible manner.



Ongoing Commitment

- Maximise the benefits of escalation services, by making PACT work as effectively as possible and pushing for greater coverage and improved outcomes for consumers using ADR

Immediate Focus

- Improve the useability of the CAA website by presenting the information differently so that consumers have access to clear, helpful advice pages on the CAA website, taking account of accessibility needs and insights on consumer preferences.

Future Ambition

- Work across CAA departments to identify sources of industry data which may benefit consumers and consider how we can present this information to empower consumer choices.

Steps taken to empower consumers helps the CAA embed the consumer principles of **education, access, choice and redress**, and promoting **fairness and equity** through the promotion of dispute resolution and creating an environment for informed consumers to make good choices based on clear information.

FURTHER THE INTERESTS OF CONSUMERS IN COMPETITION AND GROWTH

We want our regulatory framework to incentivise providers to deliver value for consumers.

We consider that well-functioning competitive markets are the best way to deliver the aviation services that consumers demand. However, where the CAA undertakes economic regulation of airports and NATS, it is important to us that the interests of consumers are considered and furthered.

We will continue to work with stakeholders and our Consumer Panel so that our regulatory framework remains appropriate and continue to further the interests of consumers.

We take a proportionate approach to economic regulation, targeting it to situations where it is most needed and tailoring it to the relevant market conditions. We also keep our regulatory frameworks under review and allow them to evolve to respond to new challenges and circumstances presented at each price control review period.

In working to support growth, we will put a greater focus on environmental sustainability, balancing the needs of aviation consumers and the value placed by the public on sustainability. Access to both the CAA's Consumer Panel and Environmental Sustainability Panel provides a useful structure to achieve this.

We will conduct lessons learned and consider latest best practice and opportunities to evolve our form of regulation, exploring alternative approaches for the future and developing and consulting on any new regulatory frameworks.



Ongoing Commitment

- Protecting consumers from substantial market power, ensuring value for money and establishing incentives for efficiency with an increasing focus on environmental sustainability.

Immediate Focus

- Finalise current price controls in respect of Heathrow (taking into account the outcome of the current regulatory appeal) and NATS.
- Keep market conditions under review and promote competition where appropriate, including in respect of the lighter touch commitments framework at Gatwick airport and in respect of certain types of air traffic services.

Future Ambition

- Undertake a review of the approach to the price control of Heathrow.
- Support environmentally sustainable growth and the plans of regulated airports to aid the transition to Net Zero balanced with wider consumer interest considerations.

Our focus on promoting sustainable growth and competition is evidence of our commitment to the consumer principles to **protect economic interests and promote sustainability**. It also helps facilitates **access and choice** as well as **safety and quality**.

EMBED THE CONSUMER INTEREST IN CAA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

We want consideration of the consumer interest to be embedded across the range of activities and functions undertaken by the CAA with informed debate shaped by experienced consumer policy professionals.

The CAA Consumer Panel has a key role to play in ensuring that the consumer interest remains central to our policy development by acting as a critical friend and providing challenge where needed. The unique mix of skills and experience of its members means that it is able to influence across the CAA including in areas of innovation, environmental sustainability (working in collaboration with the CAA Environmental Sustainability Panel), consumer protection and economic regulation, and is well placed to help shape our consumer research work.

We will take on board the lessons learned from the outputs of the Panel's own work programme and from the advice, guidance and challenge provided by the Panel. We are also committed to providing the Panel with ongoing access to CAA colleagues from across the CAA, including an invitation

for the Chair to attend a minimum of 2 board meetings per year and to engage regularly with a non-executive director.

This will in turn strengthen the ability of the Board to recognise and understand consumer issues which will be bolstered further through the implementation of the recommendations from the government review of the CAA to include consumer-facing experience in the renewal of the board skills matrix.

We will also consider further, practical measures to identify and record the extent to which the consumer interest is considered in our governance processes, including a regular focus on consumer issues at the Board, a dashboard of consumer data and by providing the Panel with sight of all board agendas to enable them to indicate items that are likely to be particularly relevant to consumers.



Ongoing Commitment

- Continue to build the evidence base, with assistance from the Consumer Panel, so that our decisions are based on sound evidence of consumer experience and sentiment.
- Providing regular access for the Panel to the CAA Board to further embed the consumer voice across CAA functions.

Immediate Focus

- Support the Panel's work plan aspiration to drive better outcomes for consumers, with a focus on emerging challenges for the industry and the regulatory environment.

Future Ambition

- Influence future policies and frameworks, including ongoing Government consultations on areas such as CAA powers and ATOL reform.

As well as promoting the consumer principles, the Consumer Panel helps the CAA deliver them. It delivers valuable representation of different consumer groups and embeds the principles of **access, choice, information, education, safety and quality, protection of economic interests, fairness and equity, and redress.**

CAA CONSUMER ACTIVITIES



OUR CONSUMER ACTIVITIES

The CAA's overarching strategy sets out that the purpose of the CAA is to:

- help deliver high standards of safety, security and consumer protection for the benefit of consumers and the public.
- uphold consumer choice, value and fair treatment.
- enhance vibrant, competitive and innovative aviation and aerospace sectors.
- share with and learn from others, working with partners to ensure our regulatory expertise is used to improve standards and innovation worldwide and build the UK's global influence.
- cultivate an agile, diverse, high-performing and values-based organisation that is greater than the sum of its parts and committed to continually improving our services.
- support the sectors as they mitigate and reduce their negative environmental impacts, including emissions and noise.

It also states that the CAA's mission is to improve aviation and aerospace for consumers and the public and our vision to constantly challenge ourselves and our stakeholders to improve safety, security and consumer protection outcomes.

We aim to take the consumer interest into account across all these functions in delivery of our mission. Specific work undertaken directly for the benefit of consumers is conducted primarily by our Consumer and

Markets Group and is set out over the following pages. This is presented by theme, consistent with the focus areas identified in our consumer strategy, and covers:

- Consumers in vulnerable circumstances
- Routine compliance of consumer protection legislation
- Empowering consumers
- Promote competition and growth
- Consumer Panel



CONSUMERS IN VULNERABLE CIRCUMSTANCES

A consumer can find themselves vulnerable when their personal circumstances, the specific environment or a particular business practice makes them especially susceptible to harm.

A consumer may be less able to engage equally in the market or be more adversely affected or suffer detriment from the way aviation operates because of both their *individual characteristics* or *personal circumstances*.

By individual characteristics, we mean attributes that are more likely to be innate to that person and less likely to change over time such as disability, race, and gender.

In contrast, personal circumstances tend to relate to a period in time, for example if they experience delays and cancellations: if are travelling with their family, their financial circumstances at the time, or how well they can communicate in English or the local language of their destination.

We have worked closely with our Consumer Panel to develop our

understanding of vulnerability in aviation and consider how the CAA should respond, including how to take account of consumers in vulnerable circumstances in future policy and legislative frameworks. We are also committed to adhering to the Public Sector Equality Duty, not just to meet our legal obligations but also to ensure that all consumers and customers feel confident when engaging with the CAA across all our regulatory functions.

Where the vulnerability is related to the practical realities of booking and taking a flight, we work with airlines and airports to promote special assistance and to improve the consistency of services provided across the entire passenger journey.

Reports and analysis produced by our Consumer Policy and Enforcement Team provide an overview of performance against set criteria and deep dives into specific areas. In the past, these have shown a trend improvement in the assistance received by passengers and the provision of passenger rights.

More recently, however, they have shown the impact that unexpected shocks can have to the progress made, as we observed in the decline in standards that occurred during and immediately after the pandemic. We are working with industry to return service provision to the level seen pre-pandemic.

We also work closely with Government and with international partners such as ECAC (European Civil Aviation Conference) and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) to promote the highest standards globally.

The CAA dedicates a significant section of its annual UK Aviation Consumer Survey to measuring and reporting on accessibility and the experience of disabled passengers.

This demonstrates that the majority of disabled passengers find that their impairment makes flying difficult, and that the experience has still not bounced back from the impacts of the pandemic.



The CAA is committed to leading by example.

We encourage colleagues across the CAA to engage with our vulnerability toolkit to:

- identify where our duties require us to have due regard to certain objectives related to equality and where our role allows us to promote inclusivity,
- not discriminate in our role as a service provider to the public and industry participants,
- provide important information to consumers and individuals more broadly in a way that is easy to access and simple to understand.

ROUTINE COMPLIANCE OF CONSUMER PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Air passenger rights exist to protect consumers, by setting out obligations to provide assistance to consumers who need support, and to provide redress for consumers when things go wrong and where commercial incentives may impede businesses from doing the right thing for consumers made vulnerable by their circumstances.

These sit alongside consumer legislation which sets out obligations and remedies for transparent pricing and contractual clarity and prohibiting unfair commercial practices.

As the body responsible for enforcing the rights that exist to help consumers in a range of situations, we act to seek widespread and routine compliance with the legal obligations concerning accessibility, disruption and tour operator insolvencies.

Where there is systematic failure to meet these legal obligations, the CAA will intervene.

The CAA's key objective to achieving routine compliance is to obtain assurance that the airline's internal policies and processes are fit for purpose and are consistently applied.

We primarily achieve this through both ongoing engagement with industry and through the publication of compliance reports and deep dive assessments of specific elements of the law. Through these we have worked with the largest airlines to gain assurances on compliance and prompted improvements as businesses seek to avoid negative publicity. We have also pursued formal enforcement where needed.

We also manage the ATOL scheme. Businesses selling flight-inclusive package holidays must have a license from us to do so. This guarantees a minimum level of

competence and financial fitness is met, reducing the likelihood that a consumer will be impacted by an insolvency. It also guarantees assistance to customers overseas in the event that their travel company fails and that refunds will be provided to those with future bookings.

The CAA monitors compliance with the scheme rules and legal requirements set down for these companies.

Our aim for ATOL is to create a pro-compliance culture within the travel sector for the benefit and peace of mind of consumers and to create a level playing field for businesses. Our relationship with these businesses through the ATOL scheme means we are able to reach businesses across the sector to seek improved compliance with the ATOL Regulations, as well as general consumer law, to conduct reviews and audits of businesses and share



intelligence with other enforcement bodies such as Trading Standards.

Underpinning these functions are the legal enforcement powers that are available to the CAA when seeking compliance.

We have been discussing the need for enhancements to our powers with Government and are excited by the commitment to introduce these when parliamentary time allows.

In the meantime, we intend to be more ambitious in the use of our existing powers and will explore how to better address the collective harm that occurs when businesses fail to adhere to these important consumer protections.

EMPOWERING CONSUMERS

Confidence is key to ensuring consumers feel able to return to air travel following years of disruption caused by the pandemic and the subsequent disruption to the provision of aviation services.

Our aviation consumer survey has identified concerns over the likelihood and impact of further disruption as a barrier to consumers who have chosen not to fly recently, alongside budget constraints.

We believe that the **empowerment of consumers**, through the provision of information to help them make choices, through knowing what their rights are when travelling by air and through having access to effective mechanisms to help access those rights **is key to improving consumer confidence in air travel.**

Information provided via the CAA website

Our website provides information on air passenger rights, consumer protections and other advice: from planning your trip and understanding different fees and charges to guidelines for checked and carry-on bags. The advice on how to resolve travel problems is particularly important, as we want to make sure individual rights are regularly and easily exercised.

We are aware, however, that the way this is currently presented and the position of this information on our website could be significantly improved. We plan to do this.

We are also conscious that the CAA holds information about industry performance gathered when conducting broader regulatory oversight. When collated and analysed, these provide interesting

insights into factors such as likelihood to be impacted by a delay or last-minute cancellation as well as general information on how well served UK consumers are for certain routes and how these are impacted by global events. We are considering how this data may be published to further improve consumer insights.

Access to Alternative Dispute Resolution

Consumers should be confident to know that, when things do go wrong, they are empowered to enforce their individual passenger rights.

Most consumers who have recourse to these rights successfully claim directly from the airline. However, a further key tool for consumers to escalate individual complaints or unresolved claim for redress is via an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) body or the CAA's Passenger and Advice Team (PACT).



The CAA is the competent authority designated to oversee ADR in aviation. This means that we have some oversight of the schemes and allows us to implement policies that ensure that the decisions are binding on businesses. We use our PACT service to provide an independent opinion on individual cases that we expect airlines to abide by.

We believe that membership of an ADR body should be mandatory for all airlines operating to and from the UK to ensure that everyone has access to a firm judgment without the need to go to court, a view that we have expressed to government. However, **currently membership of an ADR body is voluntary.**

PROMOTE COMPETITION AND GROWTH

Aviation is a highly competitive market, with competition acting as a key mechanism to protect consumer interests, providing the incentives for businesses to provide choice, value, and good customer service.

In general, competition exists because of the range of airlines serving consumers and the choice of airports available. The CAA has a role in ensuring that monopoly providers of air traffic control services and airports with substantial market power cannot exploit their positions at the expense of consumers.

We have concurrent competition powers with the CMA to enforce competition law and undertake market studies in the airport and air traffic sectors. We also make market power determinations to establish whether to regulate airport operators by means of an economic licence.

We set price controls for airports and

establish performance targets and incentives for the monopoly provider for air traffic services.

This is all conducted with the aim of ensuring that the services available provide good value, with the consumer interest at the heart of our decision making.

Some examples include:

- Our Outcome Based Regulatory framework incentivises Heathrow Airport to meet consumers' needs in terms of their range, availability, continuity and quality. We do this by setting service quality outcomes, measures, targets and incentives as part of the price control review process. Our framework addresses issues that consumer research tells us are important to passengers, or processes that feed into outcomes that consumers want (e.g., no lost bags, punctual services).
- The economic regulation of Gatwick Airport is based on a set of lighter touch commitments given by the airport, reflecting the greater

competitive pressures at Gatwick and designed to encourage the airport and airlines to agree arrangements that best suit the needs of consumers, including the maximum level of airport charges that can be levied and a system of rebates if certain service quality targets are missed. The measures and targets were revised in 2021 following a review informed by new consumer research.

- We have also engaged with our Environmental Sustainability Panel, considering how environmental performance can play a more significant role in our regulatory approach going forward.
- We are proposing service quality targets and incentives for NERL as part of the NR23 review that will provide reputational and financial incentives to improve its environmental and delay performance, as referenced in the Environmental Sustainability Panel's work programme.



We consider that well-functioning competitive markets are the best way to deliver the aviation services that consumers demand. As such, we take a proportionate approach to economic regulation by targeting it to cases where it is needed and tailoring it to the relevant market conditions.

Over the years, we have removed certain airports from licence-based economic regulation and adopted a lighter touch regulatory approach where appropriate. We have also worked with the CMA on competition cases and on competition advocacy in the airport sector.

CONSUMER PANEL

The Consumer Panel was established by the CAA to be the voice of the consumer across all its functions.

Industry groups and trade associations provide useful insights to help Government and regulators understand the impact of their policies and decisions on the market. While the perspective of these business communities capture, to some degree, the needs of their customers they are primarily focussed on commercial or operational impacts.

By bringing together a panel of experts with a range of relevant experience, the CAA seeks to assure itself that the consumer is heard alongside other stakeholder groups and is a priority where there is a risk to the most vulnerable consumers.

This Panel was established in 2014 voluntarily by the CAA and has

had a significant impact on our work, providing expert advice across our functions including economic regulation, innovation and our strategic framework, with recent specific input including:

- Advanced Air Mobility and Quantum Technology
- Consumer vulnerability, and non-visible disabilities
- Consumer environmental information
- ATOL reform and Economic regulation price controls

The Panel has discretion over its priorities and work programme and is able to direct its attention to any issues within its remit that it considers important.

By doing so, the Panel is able to encourage the CAA to look at certain issues, helping to identify topics that may not otherwise be on the CAA agenda.

One area of influence that is clear in our work is the emphasis that the Panel places on having a strong evidence base. They have, and continue to have, input into the design of our Aviation Consumer Survey, ensuring consumer research was conducted as part of the ATOL reform program and helping to design future deliberative research.

The CAA are also grateful for the Panel's focus on how aviation creates consumer vulnerability and also their clear articulation of how we can and should make use of the established consumer principals in the context of aviation.

The Panel engages with Government and industry bodies, providing the consumer perspective in responses to consultations and evidence to the Government's Transport Select Committee.



The Consumer Panel is clearly an important part of our commitment to challenge ourselves, and our stakeholders, to improve consumer protection outcomes.

We will continue to support the Panel and remain committed to the openness and collaboration that we are proud to have fostered with the Panel.

This will include ensuring that the Panel has regular access to the CAA Board and regular engagement with senior CAA colleagues, and that it works in collaboration with the CAA's Environmental Sustainability Panel when appropriate on cross-cutting issues

OUR CONSUMER STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

OUR CONSUMER MISSION

To provide effective statutory consumer protection, lead improvements in accessibility and further the interests of users of air transport when fulfilling our regulatory duties.

OUR CONSUMER VISION

For the UK to have a competitive aviation market where consumers have **access** to a choice of services, are **informed** enough to make the most of the choices available, have **confidence** that businesses will meet their obligations if things go wrong and are **empowered** to challenge them if they don't.

OUR PURPOSE

To deliver high standards of consumer protection for the benefit of consumers and the public, and to uphold consumer choice, value and fair treatment

OUR VALUES



OUR REGULATORY APPROACH

We will be guided by our regulatory principles in making independent regulatory decisions to deliver on our vision, acting within the legislative and policy framework set by Parliament and Government.

Promote improvements for consumers in vulnerable circumstances

- Our goal: We understand how the aviation environment creates vulnerability and effectively enforce consumer rights that protect and promote fair access to air travel.

Improve routine compliance with consumer protection legislation

- Our goal: There is routine compliance across the industry with air passenger rights, ATOL regulations and consumer legislation.

Empower consumers to take full advantage of the competitive market

- Our goal: Consumers are provided with clear and accurate online advice and industry information via the CAA's website and have access to an effective complaints escalation services.

Further the interests of consumers in competition and growth

- Our goal: Industry is incentivised to deliver value for money for consumers, and to pursue growth and promote competition, with reference to environmental sustainability where appropriate, taking into account the trade-offs and value that different consumer place on different aspects of the market.

Embed the consumer interest in CAA governance structures and policy development

- Our goal: The interests of consumers is clearly understood and considered in policy development across the CAA, with challenge provided by the CAA's Consumer Panel.