

CAA Consumer Panel

Work Programme:

November 2024 – November 2026



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About the CAA Consumer Panel

Who we are

The CAA Consumer Panel is a group of nine independent experts, who bring together deep consumer expertise and experience along with strategic thinking, applying these in a practical way to improve the experience for commercial air passengers. The Panel members' biographies can be found at the end of this document.

What we do

The Panel acts as a non-statutory critical friend, giving expert advice to the CAA as policy is developed, and making sure the consumer interest is central. The Panel's objective is to champion the interest of consumers.

The key activities of the Panel are to:

- Help the CAA to understand fully, and take account of, the interests of consumers in its policy development and decisions.
- Review existing CAA research, and where appropriate, request that the CAA undertakes new targeted research, and gathers intelligence to understand the aviation consumer experience.
- Provide the CAA with feedback from a consumer perspective on the effectiveness of its policies and practices.

Our remit

The Panel focuses on the interests of current and future aviation consumers. Citizen or community issues, such as noise from flightpaths, do not fall under our remit.

Chair's Foreword

The Consumer Panel's last work programme was published in September 2022 covering a period of 18 months until April 2024. During 2022, consumers were beset by huge levels of disruption, last-minute cancellations and poor customer service resulting from the pandemic and its aftermath, with consumers at risk of vulnerability particularly poorly served. Therefore, the key focus of our last work programme was on driving the industry's recovery, rebuilding consumer confidence and improving services. Alongside this, we also focused on environmental sustainability, innovation and accessibility.

Notwithstanding some notable disruptive events such as the NATS failure in 2023 and the CrowdStrike incident in 2024, over the course of our last work programme we have seen the industry recover and rebuild, with UK passenger demand now reaching 2019 levels, and some large UK airports exceeding 2019 levels. While there continues to be ongoing disruption and cases of unacceptable service failings for vulnerable passengers which need to be addressed, it is not at the scale experienced in 2022.

We welcome the signs of growing consumer confidence, but it is clear that there is a new 'post-pandemic' normal emerging in the UK aviation industry which is impacting consumers' ability and willingness to fly. Navigating the new 'post-pandemic' aviation landscape in the best interests of consumers will be the overriding focus of our new work programme. We will focus on understanding the key themes and trends shaping this landscape, how they might impact consumers and then work with and influence the CAA and others to take action where necessary. Developments in the wider economy, the new Government's priorities (including for legislative change) and the development of new technologies will also come into play.

While we will remain flexible to these developments and adapt to future priorities, we intend to explore the following themes in our work programme:

1. Reversing the steady decline and improving consumer satisfaction with their overall travel experience, particularly in respect of delay and poor customer service, and regional dissatisfaction in Northern Ireland and Scotland.
2. Improving consumer education, confidence and trust in respect of passenger rights and redress, sustainability and innovation, through the provision of information and consumer engagement and research. This will mean consumers are more informed and empowered to exercise their rights, can make better choices and have a greater say in future sustainability and innovation developments as ultimately, they will be affected by any changes that are introduced. We will also continue to work with the CAA on how it can make best use of its existing information gathering and enforcement powers, to drive stronger reputational incentives around industry performance in order to help improve consumer outcomes.

3. Building on the progress in our last work programme, we will continue to focus on accessibility to ensure broad and diverse consumer participation in the market, and consider how to mitigate the potential risks of exclusionary effects from wider economic, technological and regulatory changes so that those who want to travel can continue to do so. In particular, whilst performance has improved since the immediate post-pandemic years, the quality of service provided to passengers with more complex accessibility needs and disabilities falls short too often, and we will continue to work with the CAA to improve this.
4. Start considering, with the CAA and others, the interactions between competing aviation policy objectives relating to the delivery of a growing, thriving and competitive aviation sector and the benefits this brings to consumers and the wider economy, alongside meeting sustainability goals including those related to climate change, which is one of the biggest challenges facing the aviation sector. This is a highly complex area that needs to be considered strategically by the Government, CAA and industry stakeholders over a period of time, but we feel it is a topic that will gain more traction over the next two years and needs to be explored.

New technology, innovation and airspace modernisation are expected to play a role in helping meet sustainability goals. However, we consider it is also important for the Panel to contribute to conversations on how to consider difficult trade-offs in a fair and equitable way, and shine a light on the real human impact future policies in this area could have. Given that consumers will be directly impacted by such decisions and there is a risk of potential detriment, exclusion and discrimination, they must play a key role in shaping the aviation services of the future.

Sitting within these overarching themes, we have identified specific areas of work for the next two years which are set out below.

The next two years will be crucial in shaping the future aviation landscape for consumers. The Consumer Panel will be agile and adapt to changing circumstances as required, and work with the CAA, the Government and industry stakeholders to ensure that consumers' needs are at the heart of decisions.

Internally, the Panel will continue to build its impact and visibility across the CAA and look for opportunities to do this.

During this work programme, we will see the terms of several members of the Consumer Panel come to an end. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their valuable contributions to the Panel over the years and look forward to welcoming new members in due course.



Jenny Willott
CAA Consumer Panel Chair

Chapter 1

The Panel's vision

What we want to see for aviation consumers

The Panel exists to make sure that the consumer interest is placed at the heart of the CAA's work, helping the CAA uphold consumer choice, value and fair treatment and improve consumer outcomes. We want to see markets and regulation that have the clear interests of current and future aviation consumers at their heart and that work to ensure effective airline competition on price and service quality. Airports should provide an affordable, good quality and consumer focused service, with empowered consumers able to make informed decisions about which companies to use. Airline services and airport environments should be designed and delivered to ensure accessibility for everyone, and consumers who may need extra help should be supported to make sure they can effectively access the market. And when things go wrong, consumers should have quick, fair and easy access to redress.

How we prioritise our work

The Panel is a small, specialist policy resource for the CAA and delivers high quality, evidence-based advice in a way which is designed to maximise its impact. The Panel therefore prioritises its work carefully, asking five key questions before embarking on any given project:

- Is the issue important for aviation consumers?
- Does it fall within the Panel's remit?
- Is it an area where the CAA is best placed to effect change?
- Is it (or should it be) a priority for the CAA?
- Is it an area where the consumer voice is less understood or not represented which could benefit from additional focus?

The Panel will also prioritise the interests of consumers it considers to be at greater risk of vulnerability throughout its work.

Chapter 2

Assessing the evidence

Introduction

In order to develop policy that reflects consumers' priorities and needs, and is correctly targeted, a strong evidence base is key. For previous work programmes, we have drawn on the CAA's Aviation Consumer Survey as our primary evidence base. We have also drawn on other pieces of research the CAA has undertaken on an ad hoc basis.

At the time of drafting this work programme, we have been working with the CAA and its appointed consultant (Savanta) on the design of the next wave of the Aviation Consumer Survey (wave thirteen). Fieldwork is currently being undertaken and the results are expected to be published towards the end of the year. However, this means that we will be relying on the findings from the previous wave (wave twelve), which was undertaken in Autumn 2023, for the purposes of this work programme.

While we draw on relevant findings from wave twelve to help inform our work plans, we have expanded our evidence base to include other items of more recent publicly available insights. These include:

- The NATS¹ Aviation Index² – seventh edition.
- Two UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funded studies – (i) Future Flight Survey 2024³; and (ii) Framework for Future Flight in the UK: Principles⁴ from a deliberative Public Dialogue.
- Consumer research⁵ commissioned by the Department for Transport (DfT) to explore the effect of carbon labels on consumer flight choices.
- The CAA's airline website accessibility⁶ audit in 2023.

¹ The UK air traffic management service.

² See <https://www.nats.aero/features/aviation-index-2024/>. Published in September 2024.

³ See [Future Flight Survey 2024 Report\[50\] \(ukri.org\)](#). Published in July 2024.

⁴ See [Framework for Future Flight in the UK - Principles from a deliberative Public Dialogue\[76\] \(website-files.com\)](#). Published in July 2024.

⁵ The Consumer Panel input to this research, which helped ensure a consumer focus.

⁶ See <https://www.caa.co.uk/newsroom/news/new-report-highlights-accessibility-issues-with-airline-websites/>.

In addition, we will continue to draw on relevant CAA data and insights including the quarterly Aviation Trends publication⁷, passenger complaints data⁸ as well as the CAA's Airport and Airline Accessibility Performance Frameworks.

Set out below are the key findings from wave twelve of the Aviation Consumer Survey. This is followed by the key findings from the NATS Aviation Index and the two UKRI funded studies.

Aviation Consumer Survey

As noted above, our primary evidence base is the CAA's Aviation Consumer Survey (the Survey). This is an annual nationally representative survey of 3,500 UK consumers, which measures attitudes and behaviour towards flying over time. The Survey aims to:

- Increase understanding of flying behaviours and attitudes towards flying, including barriers for non-flyers, as well as priorities for choosing future flights;
- Increase understanding of perceptions of the aviation industry in the areas of safety, choice, value and fair treatment, environmental performance and security;
- Measure satisfaction with the flying experience; and
- Increase understanding of attitudes towards experiences of disruption when flying and the handling of any subsequent complaints.

The Consumer Panel was instrumental in introducing and developing the Survey, which is a significant strategic tool for measuring consumer satisfaction with the aviation experience.

Aviation Consumer Survey 2023 - Wave twelve

We worked closely with the CAA and Savanta to provide support on wave twelve of the Survey in Autumn 2023. Further detail on our input and the key findings are set out in our 2023/2024 Annual Report.⁹ In particular, the Survey found that:

- While the proportion of consumers flying in the previous 12 months (54%) had risen back to pre-pandemic levels, the profile of recent flyers was different post-pandemic with older (47%) and disabled passengers (34%) much less likely to have flown recently than in 2019 (58% and 40% respectively).
- Passengers' satisfaction with their most recent flying experience fell steadily from 84% in November 2019 to 79% in October 2023. The cumulative longer-term trend is even more noteworthy especially when compared to levels of satisfaction in March 2016, when 9 in 10 consumers (90%) were satisfied with their most recent

⁷ See <https://www.caa.co.uk/media/akqfqyxo/aviation-trends-2024-q2.pdf>.

⁸ See <https://www.caa.co.uk/data-and-analysis/uk-aviation-market/passenger-complaints/2024/>.

⁹ See <https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/22781>.

journey. In addition, satisfaction declined particularly sharply amongst older (-8 percentage points) and disabled passengers (-8 percentage points) since 2019, which may explain why they are flying less.

- Passengers who were dissatisfied with their travel experience cited delays, poor customer service and issues at security as the highest drivers of dissatisfaction.
- It is also notable that satisfaction with the overall travel experience fell substantially in Scotland (-9 percentage points) and Northern Ireland (-8 percentage points) over the previous year.
- Digital confidence continued to be a large determinant of satisfaction, with this digital divide widening since the previous year, as just two thirds (66%) of recent flyers with low digital confidence were satisfied with their overall travel experience, compared with 80% of those with higher levels of digital confidence.

Aviation Consumer Survey 2024 - Wave thirteen

As noted above, we have been working with the CAA and Savanta on the design of the next wave of the Survey (wave thirteen). Fieldwork is currently being undertaken and the results are expected to be published towards the end of the year. We will continue to input and use the latest findings to help shape our work plans set out below.

NATS Aviation Index 2024

The Aviation Index¹⁰ is NATS' annual public perception survey undertaken by Ipsos, to gauge the views of the UK public on a range of aviation related topics. Now in its seventh year, this year's survey was conducted online in May 2024 and published in September 2024. We had no involvement in this research and are using it as a publicly available resource.

The key findings¹¹ from this year's survey include:

- Half of those completing the survey had flown within the last 12 months (50%), the highest proportion since the Covid-19 pandemic, but still below the 60% recorded in 2019.
- The cost of living is the biggest barrier for people expecting to cut back on flying next year, with 42% citing expense as a reason.
- Travelling for leisure remains the dominant reason for flying abroad, with 55% saying they are likely to fly abroad by commercial airline this year.
- Despite operational challenges affecting the aviation industry over the last twelve months, most participants rate UK airports, airlines and air traffic control as 'fairly good' or 'very good' (74%, 73% and 74% respectively).

¹⁰ See <https://www.nats.aero/features/aviation-index-2024/>.

¹¹ See [NATS releases seventh edition of annual public perception survey - NATS](#).

- Reducing carbon emissions is the public's top priority for the aviation industry (53%) which is consistent with 2023 (54%) but is a significant decrease compared with 2022 (62%) and 2020 (70%).
- Participants remain broadly supportive of introducing a frequent flyer tax which increases with every flight taken (48%), but there is growing opposition to limiting the number of flights individuals can take within a certain period (38%).
- There are mixed messages around participants' willingness to change their own behaviour and those already taking concrete action to help reduce the environmental impact of flights in the UK. One in three say they are not taking any action and while many still say they are prepared to change their behaviour, proportions are lower now than in the years either side of the pandemic.
- There is support for changes to flight paths as part of airspace modernisation efforts (42%), especially when focusing on environmental benefits. 19% of those surveyed would oppose changes if aircraft impacted new residential areas.
- When asked about 'flying taxis', 54% of participants said they would not use them, citing concerns about cost (56%), safety (50%) and a lack of trust in technology (46%) as the main reasons.
- The majority of participants continue to support the use of drones for a range of reasons, particularly for the emergency services (76%), infrastructure inspections (71%), surveillance and security (68%) and deliveries (56%).

Future Flight Challenge studies

The UKRI Future Flight Challenge funded researchers at the University of Birmingham, YouGov and Thinks Insight & Strategy to lead on two studies, which were published in July 2024:

- (i) The University of Birmingham/You Gov - Future Flight Survey 2024
- (ii) Thinks Insight & Strategy - Framework for Future Flight in the UK: Principles from a deliberative Public Dialogue

Taken together, we feel these studies are an important step in building a better understanding of consumer and public perceptions of future flight technologies including drones, advanced air mobility and electric or hydrogen regional air mobility.

We had no involvement in this research and are using it as a publicly available resource.

Future Flight Survey 2024

The Future Flight Survey is a nationally representative survey about the UK public's general awareness and understanding of future flight technologies. In particular, the survey found:

- Current levels of awareness of future flight technologies are mixed. While the vast majority of participants had heard of non-passenger carrying drones (95%), far

fewer have heard of advanced air mobility (28%) or electric/hydrogen regional air mobility (24%).

- Whilst overall there is a sense that the benefits of future flight technologies outweigh the drawbacks (58%), the research highlights the nuances of this perception, as two in five (42%) say the opposite (the drawbacks outweigh the benefits). This suggests views are relatively split on perception of future flight use, with the public recognising a number of different pros and cons.
- The main perceived benefits relate to providing support to emergency services (88%), access to isolated areas/communities (85%), reducing fossil fuel usage (77%) and creating new jobs (77%). The top cited drawbacks focus on cyber security (81%), their impact on wildlife (78%), safety concerns (77%), congestion in the sky (77%), privacy (76%), only being accessible to the wealthiest in society (76%) and not being easily accessible to those with mobility issues and/or those living with disabilities (65%).
- There are mixed views on the role of future flight technologies in tackling climate change. While a majority (56%) agree that in practice new technologies don't help to tackle climate change and that they mostly help companies make money, a majority (58%) also agree that new technological developments will be fundamental to tackling the climate crisis.
- Regarding the governance of future flight technologies, awareness of the CAA being responsible for the regulation of UK aviation is relatively high with (71%) saying they have heard of it. Moreover, the CAA is seen as an important actor in ensuring that future flight technologies are safe, should they be scaled up for commercial use within the UK. 67% say that they would feel safe if future flight technologies received UK regulatory approval, such as from the CAA.
- When it comes to future adoption of future flight technologies, people anticipate non-passenger carrying drones becoming a widespread technology in the UK in ten years' time, though the proportions saying this about eVTOLs are somewhat lower. A majority do however say they would feel comfortable being a passenger in an eVTOL once introduced, though only after they had been operating for a number of years.

Framework for Future Flight in the UK: Principles from a deliberative Public Dialogue

Researchers led a deliberative public dialogue involving forty-three participants reflective of the diversity of the UK in a series of seven workshops over the course of months. It aimed to understand the public's hopes and fears around future flight technologies as well as their expectations for regulation and decision-making. Participants deliberated to develop a framework for the roll out of future flight technologies, systems and services based around fourteen high-level principles and recommendations. We consider seven of these fourteen principles to be particularly important in helping further the interests of aviation consumers in respect of future flight technologies.

- **Principle (ii)** - Research and testing must be carried out to make sure that policy and regulation for future flight technologies align with these principles.
- **Principle (iii)** - The development of future flight technology and services must involve collaboration with specialists and the public.
- **Principle (iv)** - Future flight developers and operators must be held to account by independent bodies.
- **Principle (v)** - Future flight technology and development must be transparent.
- **Principle (viii)** - Future flight technologies must be managed safely and held to the same or higher, safety standards as existing technology.
- **Principle (x)** - Future flight vehicles and operations must be designed with accessibility in mind from the start.
- **Principle (xi)** - Future flight services must be affordable to the public.

Chapter 3

Work plans 2024 - 2026

Introduction

In light of the evidence set out above and recent developments, the Panel intends to deliver the following commitments between November 2024 and November 2026. These plans are aligned to the CAA's strategy and strategic focus areas¹² and will also take into account the dynamic and fluid environment in which we are working. We will therefore remain flexible and if other issues arise we will use the criteria set out in Chapter one to check and, if necessary, reprioritise work.

Building the evidence base

As noted above, the Aviation Consumer Survey continues to be our primary source of evidence on the consumer experience. The Panel will continue to input to the design of the Survey and provide advice on new questions and areas to explore, and offer insights and analysis of the results.

We will also draw on other insights, including those noted above, to compare and contrast, and triangulate findings from different sources. This will help build a richer picture of consumer sentiment towards air travel, including rapidly evolving areas such as sustainability and innovation. This in turn will help create a more informed platform upon which to develop policy in the best interests of consumers.

We will continue to make the case for the CAA to conduct a gap analysis and use this to inform decisions on what further targeted research is needed in order to understand the aviation consumer experience as part of the new 'post-pandemic' normal and help shape the response of the CAA and others. We will also encourage the CAA to undertake consumer research in specific areas where we consider there are gaps, or a lack of understanding or where consumers are at particular risk, and would be happy to lead or support such work.

We will also continue to encourage the CAA to have a more joined-up approach to gathering and utilising data and research across the organisation (including making better use of existing information, insights and data) to help inform the CAA's priorities.

Taken together, we will draw on this evidence to help shape the priorities and areas of focus in this work programme.

¹² See <https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/21387>.

Driving better outcomes for consumers

The Panel will continue to provide input to the CAA, and more widely, to help improve the experience of aviation consumers as part of the new 'post-pandemic' normal. We will continue to work with the CAA and other Consumer Panels, Government departments, aviation industry stakeholders, consumer representatives, accessibility groups and others to maximise our impact.

Key themes

Navigating the new 'post-pandemic' aviation landscape in the best interests of consumers will be the overriding focus of our new work programme. To do this, we need to understand the key themes and trends shaping this landscape, how they might impact consumers and then work with and influence the CAA and others to take action where necessary. Developments in the wider economy, the rising cost of living, the new Government's priorities (including for legislative change and more broadly) and the development of new technologies will also come into play in shaping the future landscape.

While we will remain flexible to these developments, and adapt to future priorities and changes in the sector and wider economy as well as new consumer evidence, we intend to explore the following themes in our work programme:

1. Reversing the steady decline and improving consumer satisfaction with the overall travel experience, particularly in respect of delay and poor customer service, and regional dissatisfaction in Northern Ireland and Scotland.
2. Improving consumer education, confidence and trust in respect of passenger rights and redress, sustainability, innovation (including future flight technologies) through the provision of information and consumer engagement and research. This will mean consumers are more informed and empowered to exercise their rights, can make better choices and have a greater say in future sustainability and innovation developments as ultimately, they will be affected by any changes and new technologies that are introduced. We will also continue to work with the CAA on how it can make best use of its existing information gathering and enforcement powers, to drive stronger reputational incentives around industry performance to help improve consumer outcomes.
3. Building on the progress in our last work programme, we will continue to focus on accessibility to ensure broad and diverse consumer participation in the market continues, and consider how to mitigate the potential risks of exclusionary effects from wider economic, technological and regulatory changes so that those who want to travel can continue to do so. Such exclusionary effects could include the risk that travel becomes less affordable and accessible with rising air fares and ancillary or hidden costs; digital exclusion due to the increasing use of technology, artificial intelligence and automation; and the impact of future decisions on decarbonisation.

More generally, whilst accessibility performance has improved since the immediate post-pandemic years, the quality of service provided to passengers with more complex accessibility needs and disabilities falls short too often, and we will continue to work with the CAA to improve this.

4. Start considering with the CAA and others the interactions between competing aviation policy objectives, such as achieving a growing, thriving and competitive aviation sector and the benefits this brings to consumers and the wider economy alongside meeting sustainability goals including those related to climate change, which is one of the biggest challenges facing the sector. This is a highly complex area that needs to be considered strategically by the Government, CAA and industry stakeholders over a period of time. We have included this in our work programme because we feel it is a topic that will gain more traction over the next two years that needs to be explored and because we believe the interests of consumers must be considered throughout this debate.

New technology, innovation and airspace modernisation are expected to play a role in helping to meet sustainability goals. However, we consider it is also important for the Panel to contribute to conversations on how to consider difficult trade-offs in a fair and equitable way, and shine a light on the real human impact future policies in this area could have. Given that consumers will be directly impacted by such decisions and there is a risk of potential detriment, exclusion and discrimination, they must play a key role in shaping the aviation services of the future.

Work plans

With this context in mind, over the course of this work programme we will focus on the following work plans:

Consumer satisfaction

- We will work with the CAA and others on how to improve consumers' satisfaction with their overall travel experience, which has continued to fall steadily since 2019, with delay, poor customer service and issues at security being the highest drivers in passenger dissatisfaction. This will include a particular focus on understanding the substantial fall in regional satisfaction in Northern Ireland and Scotland as evidenced by the latest wave of the Survey. As part of this, we will continue to develop our relationship with Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (CCNI) and establish a new relationship with Consumer Scotland. By working together and sharing information, we are likely to develop a better understanding of the reasons behind growing regional dissatisfaction and consider what can be done to address this.

Consumer protection, Alternative Dispute Resolution and enforcement

- We will continue to press for improvements in protection, redress and how consumer complaints are dealt with by airlines and airports. In particular, we will input to the CAA's planned Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) review.
- The European Union (EU) has recently published interpretative guidelines¹³ on Regulation (EC) No 261/2004, which aim to clarify and enhance the application of the Regulation. Among other things, it includes guidelines and examples of what is meant by 'internal' and 'external' events in respect of extraordinary circumstances. While the UK is no longer part of the EU, we feel there could be potential consumer benefits of developing and publishing a similar list for UK passengers, to provide more clarity to consumers on their rights. This exercise would need the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including the CAA, the Government, and industry stakeholders to ensure it has a positive impact on consumers and does not unintentionally have a deterrent effect on the likelihood of consumers seeking redress.
- We will continue to advocate for mandatory ADR and better information gathering and enforcement powers for the CAA, which we strongly support and has been a long-held position of the Panel. At the same time, we will work with the CAA on how it can make better use of its existing information gathering and enforcement powers to improve transparency and drive improvements in industry performance.

Accessibility and vulnerability

- We will continue to prioritise and advocate the needs of consumers at risk of vulnerability throughout our work. In particular, we will continue to work with the CAA on further improvements to airport and airline accessibility and special assistance performance. The latest annual airport report¹⁴ published by the CAA in August 2024, found that while there continues to be improvements in airport accessibility performance since the pandemic, there is more work to do in light of growing demand.¹⁵ It also highlighted issues with a number of airports, who were rated in the 'needs improvement' category.

¹³ See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/5687/oj>.

¹⁴ See <https://www.caa.co.uk/passengers-and-public/prm/airport-accessibility-reports/>.

¹⁵ See <https://www.caa.co.uk/newsroom/news/improvements-in-airport-accessibility-continues-since-pandemic-with-more-work-to-do-as-demand-increases/>.

- We will work with the CAA as it begins implementation of the compliance programme relating to its new airline accessibility framework. In particular, the CAA has recently written to airlines asking for further information on the number of wheelchairs they carry and how many are damaged. Depending on the information received, we will encourage the CAA to publish this and generally make better use of its existing limited information gathering powers to improve transparency for consumers and drive better performance from the industry.
- As part of the next wave of the Survey, we will look to better understand the changing profile of passengers who are flying since the pandemic (as evidenced by wave twelve of the Survey), and particularly why fewer elderly and disabled passengers are flying, including whether they are experiencing additional barriers or challenges.
- We also think there is merit in revisiting the area of digital accessibility, reviewing progress made by airlines since the CAA's digital accessibility audit which the Panel had a big role in driving. We intend to look at the digital accessibility of the CAA's own website and other platforms including the new ATOL claims portal.
- We will also revisit the Panel's previous work on vulnerability, including the development of the vulnerability toolkit to see how well this is being used and embedded across the CAA.

Rising costs

- We will work with the CAA to explore attitudes around the rising cost of flying to consumers and the impact this is having on their ability and willingness to fly, including: ticket prices; ancillary charges as part of the end-to-end passenger journey (such as increasing drop-off fees); and hidden charges. Consumers are also facing additional charges related to tackling climate change, a proposed visa-waiver charge for UK citizens travelling to the EU¹⁶ from May 2025 and tourist taxes are now being charged in some destinations. At present there is still strong and growing demand to fly, despite price increases. Over the course of work programme, we will monitor consumer attitudes in this area to understand if they are still able and willing to fly as prices continue to increase.

¹⁶ See [UK citizens travelling to EU next summer will have to pay €7 visa-waiver charge | European Union | The Guardian](#)

Environmental sustainability

- We will continue to input to the CAA's work on consumer environmental information, including the most recent consultation on the CAA's draft principles and future consultations. We will also input to the CAA's recently published Aviation Environmental Review, which it has taken responsibility for since the UK left the EU.¹⁷ We would like to explore if there are potential areas of overlap or opportunities to have a more joined-up consistent approach on the presentation of environmental information to consumers.
- We will continue to build our relationship with the CAA's Environmental Sustainability Panel and look for areas of collaboration. For example, this could include arranging joint events to encourage a broader discussion with colleagues across the CAA on the interactions between consumer and environmental policy objectives, and the importance of building in consumer and environmental sustainability considerations from the start and as policy develops.
- In addition, there might be merit in looking at the area of greenwashing in more detail. While the CAA has a limited role in this space, we are happy to work with the CAA and others, including the Competition and Markets Authority and Advertising Standards Authority, to build a better understanding in this area, including the extent to which misleading greenwashing claims are impacting aviation consumers, and consider possible steps to help mitigate consumer detriment.

Innovation

- Since our last work programme, new innovative technologies have developed rapidly gaining more prominence and investment, with future technologies such as Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) technology and Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) aircraft becoming closer to reality. We will continue to input to this important area which will shape the future of flying, by ensuring consumers' interests are considered in future frameworks and policies. In particular, we will focus on the following areas:
 - The CAA's Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategy; the key challenges AI poses to consumers including around bias, transparency and privacy; how the CAA (and others) can go about regulating AI in aviation, and continue to ensure high safety standards as well as consumer confidence and trust.

¹⁷ See <https://www.caa.co.uk/passengers-and-public/environment/information-on-the-environmental-impact-of-aviation/#:~:text=The%20CAA%20is%20now%20required,civil%20aviation%20in%20the%20UK>.

- The Future Flight Challenge, including by working with UKRI on the findings from the two studies noted above, and encouraging more consumer research and engagement around consumer perceptions, confidence and trust in future flight technologies. This theme was highlighted in our response to the Law Commission's consultation on autonomy aviation, to which we will also continue to contribute.
 - Consider the consumer interest in other areas of innovation including BVLOS and horizon scanning.
 - Review the progress made by industry stakeholders in considering the CAA's guidance¹⁸ on the application of the Consumer Principles to the development of advanced air mobility. We will also continue to encourage the CAA to apply the Consumer Principles to other user cases and areas of innovation to ensure accessibility, inclusive design principles and other areas are factored in at a suitably early stage of policy development and design.
- We understand the CAA's Aviation Futures think tank is due to relaunch next year, which we welcome. We are happy to explore areas of joint interest.

Independent Review of NATS System Failure and resilience

- Regarding the NATS Independent Review, we will work with the CAA on its implementation of relevant recommendations around resilience, consumer information and improved communications to consumers on delays, cancellations, re-routing and redress.
- We will continue to work with the CAA and industry on how best to build resilience in the context of growing passenger demand and airport and airspace capacity constraints

Economic regulation

- We will continue to input to the CAA's economic regulation work. This includes the Heathrow Outcome Based Regulation (OBR) Mid-Term Review; H8 business plan guidance including the role of consumer research and engagement; the Gatwick commitments consultation process; and the NATS (En Route) plc NR28 price control.

Other areas

- We will continue to input to other areas including the design of new messaging to consumers regarding allowing liquids and gels on aircraft where advanced screening technology is in place.

¹⁸ See <https://www.caa.co.uk/publication/download/20385>.

Influencing future frameworks

The Panel recognises the many significant changes and challenges taking place in the aviation sector and wider economy at this time. Within this context, we will seek to improve outcomes for consumers by helping to ensure the right frameworks are in place. We will:

- Input to the CAA's broader strategic thinking on consumer matters including potential future updates to its consumer strategy and other strategies. We will also input to the future frameworks noted above including economic regulation, future accessibility frameworks, ATOL reform, environment sustainability, and innovation frameworks including the Future Flight Challenge and the Law Commission's work on autonomy in aviation.
- Input to relevant aspects of the Government's policy and legislative agenda insofar as these impact aviation consumers, including in respect of mandatory ADR, information gathering and enforcement powers for the CAA and other areas that arise.

Chapter 4

Who we are

Chair

Rt Hon Jenny Willott OBE, Chair

Jenny was appointed to the Panel in January 2018. Jenny was a Member of Parliament for Cardiff Central for ten years, serving as Consumer Affairs Minister, with responsibilities including consumer policy, competition policy and employment law, Women and Equalities Minister and as a Government Whip. She is now the Chief Executive of the charity Re-engage and a Non-Executive Director of SELCAT multi-academy trust. She was formerly the Director of Enterprise and Innovation at St Mary's University, Twickenham, and until December 2020 was a Non-Executive Director for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. Prior to entering Parliament, she worked in the voluntary sector, including as Chief Executive of Victim Support South Wales and Head of Advocacy for UNICEF UK.

Members

Carol Brennan

Carol is an Honorary Reader in Consumer Policy and former Director of the Consumer Dispute Resolution Centre at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. Carol was appointed to the Panel in October 2018. She recently completed a six-year term as a member of the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) Consumer Expert Panel. She is Chair of the Qualifications and Awards Panel for the Chartered Trading Standards Institute. Carol has also worked with BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation, to moderate consumer education events. Between 2015 and 2019, Carol was Chair of the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission Consumer Panel. During 2019/2020, Carol chaired a team of experts on consumer education and produced a policy options paper for the European Commission. She is a member of the Queen Margaret University Association Committee. Her research interests include consumer policy, complaint management, dispute resolution, consumer empowerment and customer experience. Carol draws on her research to influence new developments in strategy, policy and practice.

Helen Dolphin MBE

Helen is a committed campaigner on improving transport for disabled people. After becoming disabled in her early twenties, Helen trained as a journalist and worked for ITV Anglia News as a news reporter. She followed this by taking up the role of Director of Policy and Campaigns for a national disability charity. Helen now works as an independent mobility specialist advising Government, public, commercial and professional bodies on how to improve accessibility. She is currently working for Great British Railways Transition Team as the Engagement and Consultation Lead for the National Rail Accessibility

Strategy. Helen is a member of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), Joint Chair of the Heathrow Access Advisory Group, Chair of the Motability Consumer Panel, Chair of East Midlands Railway Inclusivity Group and a Member of the National Centre for Accessible Transport Advisory Committee.

Jennifer Genevieve

Jennifer is a Deputy Director at the Office of Road and Rail, with responsibility for the ORR's Periodic Review of Network Rail. She has worked on economic regulation, competition policy and consumer protection within sector regulators and industry in roles spanning the rail, aviation, water, financial services, telecoms and broadcasting sectors. She was previously Head of Stakeholder Engagement & Policy at Thames Water, leading work on the business planning process for the industry price review. She has also worked on the setting of charges at airports across Europe as Head of Airport Regulation and Policy at easyJet. Jennifer served for six years as a member of the Financial Services Consumer Panel. She also previously worked in strategy and competition policy at Ofcom.

Rick Hill MBE

Rick has had a varied career in both the voluntary sector, film/tv industry and media regulation. Chairman of Northern Ireland Screen Commission 2008-2013, he took the lead role in developing digital content, supporting new programme and delivery formats in the film/tv sector. Rick has also worked in consumer advocacy. He was Chairman of the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland, a member of Consumer Focus UK Board and Chairman of the Scottish Government Consumer and Competition Working Group. He was Deputy Chairperson of the Independent Press Standards Organisation until 2020, and until recently Communications Consumer Panel Chairperson and the Northern Ireland Member. Rick also chairs the Telecoms Industry Forum and the UK Communications Consumer Forum.

Jacqueline Minor

Following a short period lecturing in law at the University of Leicester, Jacqueline Minor joined the European civil service, first at the Court of Justice and subsequently at the European Commission. After more than 20 years' working on Internal Market issues, including a period as Director responsible for Consumer Policy, she served as Head of the Commission's Representation in the UK from 2013 until retirement in 2017.

David Thomas

David is a chartered accountant and an economist. He was appointed a specialist panel member at the Competition and Markets Authority in 2017 and in 2018 a member of competition and enforcement decision committees at the Payment Systems Regulator and the Financial Conduct Authority. Since 2016 he has run his own consulting practice focusing on economics, regulation and disputes, largely in the communications sector. David was a director of competition and regulatory finance at Ofcom where he had responsibility for, among other things, price controls. After leaving Ofcom he established and led KPMG's global economics and regulation practice.

James Walker

James is the founder of Resolver.co.uk, a free online complaints service that James grew to help over 18 million consumers a year to resolve their disputes. He has advised the Government on consumer issues and is a Board Member for Consumer Scotland, Collaboration Network and the Dispute Resolution Ombudsman. A winner of Social Entrepreneur of the year, James has advised number of start-ups and started one of the leading cashback Apps. His focus is on helping businesses deliver market-leading customer service, while helping consumers understand and exercise their consumer rights. James also has three national weekly consumer columns.

Vaughan Williams

Vaughan is a consumer protection and regulatory lawyer specialising in industry-based ADR and in regulatory compliance and enforcement. He currently works on redress matters in the Legal Division of the Financial Conduct Authority, and previously worked for a number of years at the energy regulator Ofgem where he was a senior lawyer in the enforcement team. He was previously Principal Investigator at the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman in his native Australia. Vaughan has also spent time in the community sector, having been Secretary of the Public Transport Users Association in Melbourne and representing that organisation on a number of advisory and advocacy bodies including the working party that established Victoria's Public Transport Ombudsman. He is a supervising lawyer at the Waterloo Legal Advice Service and sits as a magistrate on the Southeast London bench.

Secretariat

Freya Whiteman

Freya is a Policy Principal in the CAA's Consumers and Markets Group, assigned to support the Panel. She is an experienced consumer, regulatory policy and legal professional with a track record of delivering a number of CAA publications, consumer focused policies and legislative change. Previous roles include working in economic regulation on the H7 price control review to deliver a more consumer focused approach to service quality regulation (Outcome Based Regulation) and modernising the CAA's regulatory toolkit for NATS (En Route) Plc under the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021. More recently, she led on the CAA's airline website accessibility audit.