

***CAA Consumer Panel – Update***

**What this paper is about**

This paper briefly summarises the work of the CAA's Consumer Panel over the past year as reported in its Annual Report 2017/18.

**Points for discussion**

Delegates are asked to identify whether there are any passenger services issues at their airports that impact on the overall passenger journey experience which need to be brought to the attention of the Consumer Panel.

**Possible Action**

Depending on discussion at the meeting.

## Background

1. The CAA Consumer Panel acts as a non-statutory critical friend, giving expert advice to the CAA as policy is being developed. The Panel's objective is to champion the interest of consumers. The Panel focuses on the interests of current and potential aviation 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.
- Use existing CAA research, request the CAA undertakes new targeted research, and to gather intelligence, to understand the aviation consumer experience.
- Provide the CAA with feedback from a consumer perspective on the effectiveness of its policies and practices.

2. The Consumer Panel published its [Annual Report for 2017/18](#) in December 2018 which sets out its aims, work and priorities for 2019. One of the main areas of focus of the Panel's work has been the DfT's review of the Aviation Strategy which is presenting an opportunity to reshape a number of areas of aviation policy relating to the consumer interest. The Panel is therefore pleased that the Government has placed the consumer interest as a key priority in the Strategy.

3. The Annual Report advises that much of the Panel's focus for the current year is on the experience of consumers who complain to airlines and airports and how lessons are learned to improve services. The Panel hosted a complaints handling workshop earlier this year which was attended by the UKACCs Secretariat. Much of the discussion at the workshop related to the complaints handling process and performance by airlines rather than that of airports and the possibilities of expanding the Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) service.

4. As regards the Panel's priorities for 2019/20, these are set out in its [Work Programme](#) which runs from August 2018 to March 2020. The Panel's key priorities of access, quality and redress are central to the programme and it has committed to delivering the following key outputs:

- Developing a definition of vulnerability as it relates to aviation consumers, considering the most useful language to use in this area, and setting out what the Panel believes the key vulnerability issues in aviation to be.
- Working with the CAA to explore how technology is changing the consumer experience, and to help map the data that is currently available to inform consumer choice, along with providing recommendations on other data that could be made available.
- Considering how consumers make use of information and the role of third parties in increasing informed choice.
- Exploring the differences between how passengers and industry perceive disruption, and, recognising that disruption can occur, produce recommendations for how it might be handled better to mitigate effects on consumers, with particular focus on the interface between airlines and airports.
- Providing input to both the CAA and the Aviation Strategy on the complaints and redress landscape in aviation, including highlighting gaps in the current evidence base and how these could best be addressed, focusing on the complainant experience at the first tier, the complainant experience at the second tier, and the complainant experience of compensation and options for improving uptake of compensation.
- Providing input to the Airline Insolvency Review, representing the consumer interest and highlighting the need for adequate consumer protections.