



Consumers and Markets Group

Guidance to Industry – 15 July 2022

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is aware that Heathrow Airport required some airlines to cancel some of their outbound and inbound flights in June and July due to resourcing issues and that more cancellations are being made following the recent introduction of a daily capacity cap.

The CAA would like to ensure that the overall disruption to passengers is minimised. Therefore, we are reminding airlines of the importance of looking after their passengers and doing all they can to reduce the impact of these cancellations.

Airlines remain obliged to offer passengers whose flights have been cancelled the choice of a refund, re-routing at the earliest opportunity or re-routing at a later date. We understand that re-routing passengers is challenging during periods of major disruption and recognise that the meaning of 're-routing at the earliest opportunity' will depend on the facts of each case. In some cases, it may mean that passengers are unable to get to their destination for longer than any of us would like. Nevertheless, we urge airlines to do all they can to get passengers to their destinations and to provide frequent communication to keep them informed. Airlines must also look after these passengers while they wait and provide them with meals, refreshments and hotel accommodation proportionate to the length of the delay.

The CAA considers that these cancellations are likely to be "extraordinary circumstances" and, as such, passengers are unlikely to be entitled to compensation for these cancellations.

Notes: The CAA'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 CAA's interpretation.