

Consumer Panel Minutes

1100 – 1600, 18 April 2024

Earhart Meeting Room and Teams

Attendees

Consumer Panel

Jenny Willott (JW) - Chair of the Consumer Panel
Jacqueline Minor (JM) - Panel Members
Carol Brennan (CB)
Helen Dolphin (HD) Teams
James Walker (J Walker)
Jennifer Genevieve (JG)
Rick Hill (RH)
Vaughan Williams (VW)
Alison Harris (AH) - Minute Taker

Invited Guests

Paul Smith (PS), CAA - Agenda Item 2
Simon Sheeran (SS) - CAA Agenda Item 3
Nic Stevenson (NS) - CAA Agenda Item 4
Miranda King (MK) - CAA Agenda Item 5
Sophia Untersteggaber (SU), CAA- Agenda Item 6
Anna Bowles (AB), CAA
Helen Swanbury (HS), CAA

Apologies

DT gave his apologies for his absence.

Declaration of Interests and Approval of Minutes

The register of interests, as circulated before the meeting, were taken as read. No new interests were declared. The Minutes were approved without amendment and can be published. ACTION: Secretariat

1. Chair's Update

- 1.1. JW provided an update on her meetings since the last Panel meeting including twice with Sir Stephen Hillier, where they discussed the NATS Review; she attended the CAA Board in January with AB and HS to discuss the Consumer Dashboard and Customer Experience Update. She also met Jonathan Spence (General Counsel and Secretary of the CAA), where they discussed lessons learned from the Post Office scandal. The CAA has few prosecutions in specific areas, such as ATOL, and are confident that they had sufficient governance safeguards in place. She recently spoke with Matt Buffey and reported that ATOL reform is making progress but that this has to take account of areas of cross ownership where elements such as APC (ATOL Protection Contribution) are led by the Government.

- 1.2. JW met regularly with Paul Smith and Anna Bowles. JW also met with Tim Johnson and Peter Drissell, with whom she discussed next generation security scanners, and Ben Alcott, with whom she discussed how PACT (the Passenger Advice Complaints Team) could model best practice in complaints handling.
- 1.3. JW also met with Ruth Mallors-Ray, Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Panel, on how the two Panels can best work together. JW and RH (in his capacity as Chair of Communications Consumer Panel) also attended a Consumer Panel Chairs Meeting. Looking beyond the CAA, JW also met Elisabetta Sciallis Lisa Ahmad and Gina Walker of 'Which?' to discuss their consumer manifesto.
- 1.4. JW was invited to meet Anthony Browne, Aviation Minister, to discuss delays and consumers rights, and they had a very positive conversation.
- 1.5. here was a brief discussion on the CAA's emerging website strategy. Internally, the CAA have conducted small group consultative sessions. It was agreed that links are hard to follow with some information not easy to find. There will be a survey on the website before Christmas to gain insights about users' experience.
- 1.6. JW reminded the Panel that Freya Whiteman will be returning from her sabbatical on the 1 May and will be responsible for writing the Annual Report by the end of May which will be presented to the CAA Board in June.

2. CAA Update

- 2.1. UK industry performance is generally positive. PS reported that Heathrow airport has improved punctuality and is back to pre-Covid levels and that the February school holiday period this year had been relatively quiet. PS also updated on progress with the independent NATS review.
- 2.2. It was noted that the introduction of next generation security scanners across UK airports had been delayed by the Government to 2025, which might create challenges with consumer messaging.
- 2.3. RH asked about consumer confidence following the recent press about Boeing and asked how the CAA works with the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration). PS explained how the regulators work together and what engagement had been taking place.
- 2.4. PS updated the Panel on the impact of current geopolitics on the UK aviation industry, referencing the situation in Israel. Due to reduced demand, there are no consumer issues to report but if the conflict were to escalate, airspace closures could become necessary.
- 2.5. The weather issues in Dubai have caused delays, but flights are still arriving and taking off, despite flooding at the airport and throughout the city. That said, getting staff and passengers to and from the airport has been logistically challenging. Passengers would be covered under Regulation 261 if travelling with a European airline, but non-European airlines such as Emirates, Qatar and Quantas are not covered.
- 2.6. AB attended the Commons Transport Select Committee with Sir Stephen Hillier the day before the Panel meeting. Topics of discussion were the CAA's role; Rob Bishton's appointment as CEO; Boeing; Middle East security; next generation security scanners; the NATS Independent Review and CAA

consumer enforcement and information powers. AB provided the Select Committee with examples of complaints handling and complaints data where the CAA would benefit from new information powers.

- 2.7. AB advised that following publication of the consumer strategy, she has been given additional resource which will create new roles in her team in the area of passenger rights.
- 2.8. The Panel meeting was PS's last day working for the CAA. He told the Panel that he had really enjoyed working with them and was proud of the progress they had made together for consumers. Panel members wished him well for the future.

3. Cyber Security Oversight Update

- 3.1. SS joined the meeting, who explained that the Cyber Department manages risk from a security and safety perspective. There are three teams within the Cyber Department, which sits within Aviation Security but work closely with colleagues in SARG (the Safety and Airspace Regulation Group):
 - 1) Oversight – industry facing function with Cyber Security industry contacts;
 - 2) Policy – develops strategy in line with DfT (Department for Transport) and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation); and
 - 3) Certification – work with innovators and manufacturers to provide support to ensure good cyber foundations for new technology.
- 3.2. The CAA's first Cyber Security Oversight Strategy was published this year, running to 2026 which aims to ensure that aviation is as secure and resilient as possible.
- 3.3. SS noted that distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack is a malicious attempt to disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server, service or network by overwhelming the target with a flood of internet traffic. In aviation, this is the most common form of attack, particularly towards aerodromes and aviation suppliers. Ransomware remains the biggest threat to aviation due to the potential for financial penalties or ransom demands from hackers and targets are not only aviation business but supply chain both in aviation and more generally, such as IT providers.
- 3.4. Safety risks of concern include Global Navigation Satellite Services (GNSS) jamming and spoofing. There are low barriers to entry for malicious actors looking to jam satellite services, whereas spoofing includes intentional and nefarious attacks where a person, or programme, successfully creates and transmits to aircraft a false GPS signal. Attacks can be on commercial or military targets which can cause disruption, but with secondary radar there is resilience in aircraft to avoid the worst outcomes. Resilience plans are constantly being reviewed, tested, and audited.
- 3.5. SS explained the team's regulatory functions and their relationship with EASA (European Union Aviation Safety Agency), ICAO and the European Commission.
- 3.6. For consumers, cybercrime is on the increase with 95% of successful cyber-attacks due to human error. In general, people are more aware and conscious of the risks than previously, but the team is constantly looking for new threats, particularly with the emergence of Artificial Intelligence. To aid consumer awareness, the team provides information on fraud and flight bookings on the CAA website.

- 3.7. SS explained that his team works closely with industry to identify new threats and ways to tackle them. The aviation sector framework is robust, but strong implementation needs technical expertise, monitoring and regular testing. Aviation is ahead of other modes of transport on its approach to cyber security, however there is no room for complacency, as recent high-profile examples in aviation and other attacks demonstrate.
- 3.8. The Panel thanked SS for his update.

4. Update on CAA strategy

- 4.1. The Panel welcomed NS to the meeting. Since the last time NS presented the CAA strategy to the Panel last year, the draft has been to the Skyline Board, the Sustainability Programme Board, ExCo and the CAA Board and was published in early March.
- 4.2. The last strategy produced in 2021 was very heavily focused on supporting aviation, safety and security in the aftermath of the pandemic. When the strategy was reviewed after this, it became apparent that further consideration of consumers and customers was needed.
- 4.3. The updated strategy also reflects recent changes in ExCo membership. To help colleagues across the CAA better understand ExCo's vision for the future, NS explained that he and his team held Town Hall meetings, circulated an engagement survey to gather feedback and attended team meetings to share the vision and strategy.
- 4.4. The updated version has a new mission and vision with revised wording, and in order to make the strategy easy for staff to read and use, it is deliberately light touch to ensure that it can be more easily used by all staff in their day-to-day roles.
- 4.5. The consumer focus is now spread across two areas, Strategic Aims and Annual Strategic Objectives, and has moved to the first strategic focus area. The new strategy also aligns with feedback from the arms-length body review as well as the CAA's people strategy and consumer strategy.
- 4.6. Each year NS's team will review the strategy and is happy to engage with the Panel on future iterations.
- 4.7. The Panel thanked NS for his update.

5. CAA's Consumer Environmental Information Project

- 5.1. MK joined the meeting and provided an update on work undertaken as part of the environmental information project, which was last presented to the Panel in October 2023. She explained the planned next steps for the project, including publication of a summary of responses to the 2023 Call for Evidence on Consumer Environmental Information, the DfT's consumer environmental labelling research and a future consultation on draft principles.
- 5.2. MK encouraged the Panel to respond to the forthcoming consultation as they did to the Call for Evidence, which had been very helpful and directly led to the DfT's additional consumer research. Previous submissions and advice from the Panel had shaped the Call for Evidence and the next round of consultation.
- 5.3. MK also provided an update on what other organisations working in this space have been doing.
- 5.4. MK will ensure that the Panel are informed when the consultation is live and welcomes future engagement with the Panel.

5.5. The Panel thanked MK for the update.

6. Update on Airline Accessibility Framework

- 6.1. The accessibility team explained that the proposed approach is to consider sections of the framework on a subject-by-subject basis, reviewing a number of airlines at the same time.
- 6.2. The benefit of this approach, is that it is likely to be more useful for consumers who can choose relevant sections to review based on their specific needs, rather than having to read the report for each separate airline to compare performance. Each report will be published on the CAA's website. Currently, it is hard for consumers to compare airlines at present, so the existing information does not create competition which helps drive improvement.
- 6.3. The team propose to rate airlines with the following categories: 'compliant', 'taking steps to improve compliance' and 'not compliant'. Panel members raised concerns that all airlines should be compliant as a starting point, and it could affect consumer confidence if airlines are shown not to be compliant with the law. For those found not to be compliant, the CAA will need to have resources to follow this up and take appropriate action if needed.
- 6.4. Guidance documents will be issued to airlines and consumers will be provided with information on their rights. It is anticipated that these will be published in the summer.
- 6.5. As well as working with airlines to ensure compliance, the CAA will work to identify best practice and highlight airlines that do well.
- 6.6. The Panel thanked the CAA's accessibility team for their update.

7. AOB

None.