

Letter to Airports - 7th April 2022

Operational Impacts of Staff Shortages

I am sure you will share my concerns about the experiences that many consumers flying from the UK have experienced in recent days. As we emerge from the worst of the pandemic and consumers take advantage of the freedom to travel, instances of late notice cancellations and excessive delays at airports are not just distressing for affected consumers but have the potential to impact confidence levels across the industry, at just the point when passengers are returning to flying.

The last two years have been very challenging for the industry and the large fall in traffic volumes has led to many colleagues leaving the industry. We are aware that many of you are having to recruit large numbers of new colleagues to provide a good service to passengers as traffic volumes return this Spring and Summer. We know that you are working hard to recruit these new colleagues, but it is clear that this has not always happened sufficiently quickly to cope with the increased passenger travel in recent days. Given the consequences for passengers of cancelled and disrupted journeys I encourage you to do all you can to ensure that you have the necessary level of appropriately trained and cleared staff resources in place.

I am writing to you today to set out the CAA's expectation that airports will work closely with airlines to manage the resourcing challenges, whatever the cause, to ensure that the required capacity levels are achieved, and disruption is kept to a minimum. We appreciate that it is not always possible to anticipate all the challenges that may arise on any particular day, but where capacity constraints can be predicted in advance, we would expect effective co-operation between all parties to determine the best outcomes for consumers.

We would also like reassurance that during this disruption, accessibility provisions remain a priority and that passengers with reduced mobility continue to receive the assistance that they require. This includes the assistance provided at the airport and the safe transport of mobility and medical equipment. In line with our work on airport accessibility and our regular compliance reporting, we will be closely monitoring airport services. I would also like to remind you that our accessibility framework requires all airports to inform the CAA of all incidents where a passenger with reduced mobility misses a flight.

My colleagues will be in touch shortly to seek more information on your experience of staffing issues and the measures that you are taking to avoid disruption, including in relation to co-operation with airlines.

In the meantime, I hope that through effective planning and resilience management, any staff related disruption that you are experiencing is short lived. After the stress and constraints of the last 2 years, millions of UK consumers are looking forward to getting away and I am sure that you share our vision for hassle-free, accessible air travel for 2022 and beyond, and please feel free to get in touch if you wish to discuss these issues with myself or the team.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RM', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Richard Moriarty
CHIEF EXECUTIVE