

13 March 2023

Dear Colleague

Letter to Aviation Industry: Summer preparedness, cooperation and communication

During 2022's summer season, passengers suffered an unacceptably high level of service disruption with many delays and short-notice cancellations to their flights. While the level of disruption varied between airports and airlines, it affected many passengers. In large part, the disruption was due to insufficient resourcing across groundhandlers, airlines and airports to meet rebounding aviation demand following two years of subdued traffic. At that time, I, along with Rannia Leontaridi at the Department for Transport, wrote to airlines and airports to set out our expectation that airlines and airports work closely together to manage the resourcing challenges, whatever the cause, to ensure that disruption was kept to a minimum.

In preparation for the approaching summer season, it is critical that everyone in the industry works to deliver a safe and high-quality performance for passengers. At the first Aviation Council meeting, some industry participants raised the issue of instances of ineffective operational cooperation. In particular, some airports considered that competition law concerns had resulted in insufficient sharing of information regarding airlines' groundhandling resourcing which, for example, prevented airports from planning effective stand allocation.

Industry needs to comply with competition law, but we do not consider that competition law creates a significant obstacle to resilient and efficient aviation services and, depending on the circumstances, certain forms of cooperation are permissible. Businesses should not be deterred from effective planning of operations with the other parts of the aviation system involved in delivering services to passengers in the mistaken belief that they may breach competition law.

The CAA has concurrent competition functions with the CMA in relation to airport operation and air traffic services. The CMA has recently consulted on draft guidance on the extent to which competing businesses can cooperate in compliance with competition law ([Draft guidance on Horizontal Agreements](#), chapter 8 of which concerned information exchange) and we also recommend that businesses obtain their own advice relevant to their circumstances, including in particular about the extent to which sharing information can be done compliantly with competition law.

Yours sincerely



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