

CAA Consumer Panel

Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2026



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About the CAA Consumer Panel

Who we are

The CAA Consumer Panel is a small group of independent experts, who bring together deep consumer expertise and experience along with strategic thinking, applying this in a practical way to improve the aviation experience for consumers. Panel members' biographies can be found at the end of this document.

What we do

We act as a non-statutory critical friend, providing expert advice to ensure that the consumer interest is central to CAA policy development and decisions. Our objective is to champion the interests of consumers.

Our key activities 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 gather intelligence, in order to understand the aviation consumer experience.
- Provide the CAA with feedback from a consumer perspective on the effectiveness of its policies and practices.

Our remit

We focus on the interests of current and potential aviation consumers. Citizen or community issues, such as noise from flightpaths, do not fall under our remit.

Chair's Foreword

Over this reporting year, we have continued to deliver our November 2024 to November 2026 work programme, which is almost complete. Our overriding focus has been on navigating the 'post-pandemic' aviation landscape in the best interests of consumers, by building the evidence base, driving better outcomes for consumers and influencing future frameworks.

We have also continued to support the CAA as it delivers against the five priorities set out by the Secretary of State for Transport in 2025/26¹ on: (i) growth and innovation; (ii) airspace modernisation; (iii) the decarbonisation of aviation; (iv) modernising the CAA's consumer focus to put consumers first; and finally (v) efficiency, effectiveness and resilience.

Consumer landscape

During this period, we have seen a number of strategic and regulatory developments shaping the 'post-pandemic' consumer landscape which present opportunities and challenges for consumers, the government, CAA and industry to navigate. This landscape has provided the strategic backdrop against which we have been progressing our work over the last year. Key developments and themes include:

Growth and innovation

- Implementation of the government's Regulatory Action Plan² (RAP), launched in March 2025 and updated in October 2025, has continued at pace, which aims to reform the UK's regulatory landscape to drive economic growth and innovation. This includes the development of 'growth goals' for each regulator, proposals to reform and strengthen the Growth Duty and a commitment to reduce the administrative costs of regulation on businesses by 25% by the end of Parliament. Airport expansion has also been a key area of focus, with the government approving the expansion of Gatwick and Luton airports and plans for expansion at Heathrow airport continuing at pace in recent months.³
- At the same time, there has been increased focus on aerospace innovation as a key strategic priority and enabler of growth. This includes strengthening the

¹ The CAA's response to these priorities can be found [here](#).

² See [link](#).

³ At the time of drafting this report, legal challenges against plans to extend the second runway at Gatwick airport and expand Luton airport have recently been rejected. The government has also recently published its draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS). See [link](#).

Regulatory Innovation Office (RIO) to remove barriers to innovation, driving the safe adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the aviation sector and digitising regulatory services. There have also been a number of Future of Flight developments including: the launch of the CAA's Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) roadmap; Amazon Prime Air trialling its first UK drone deliveries; consultations on regulatory change to enable commercial Vertical Take-off and Landing (VTOL) operations to take place by 2028; the Law Commission finalising its recommendations to modernise the legal framework for highly automated and autonomous aviation; and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) driving forward a new phase of the Future Flight Programme.⁴

Consumer protection and accessibility

- The CAA has also continued to deliver its expanded consumer protection work programme, with new areas of focus including:
 - the launch of a new compliance programme looking at whether airlines are meeting their obligations under UK261 legislation when consumers face flight disruption;
 - a review of the consumer purchasing journey; and
 - various strands of accessibility related work, including reviewing airline compliance against the CAA's Airline Accessibility Performance Framework; a consultation into potential requirements on airlines to publicly report damage to mobility aids, and inputting to the Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group (AATFG) report and Implementation Group (AAIG).
- Overall, there has been a significant step change in the CAA's ambition and approach towards its consumer protection and accessibility work, which we strongly welcome.
- More broadly, we have also seen direct consumer enforcement powers come into force for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 (DMCC), which marks a significant change to the consumer protection landscape.

There have also been a number of other developments around the completion of the NATS Independent Review Report recommendations, the launch and implementation of the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS) - which aims to be operational by summer 2026

⁴ See links: [Innovative aviation projects cleared for take off – UKRI](#) and [Final evaluation of the Future Flight Challenge – UKRI](#).

- and in the area of environmental sustainability all of which have important implications for consumers.

Against this backdrop, we are pleased to have provided support, advice and guidance to the CAA on several strands of work as set out below. We feel we have had particular impact in the areas of innovation, economic regulation, accessibility and consumer vulnerability, and embedding the consumer interest across the CAA which has been a key area of focus this year. In addition to progressing the priorities identified in our work programme, which is now almost complete, we have also seen an increase in other work being brought proactively to the Panel for input across the CAA's wide remit. Alongside this, there has been growing interest from colleagues across the CAA, including ExCo and Board members, asking to observe formal Panel meetings. These trends suggest the Panel's visibility and impact across the CAA is continuing to grow, which is encouraging.

Over this reporting year, we have also seen record breaking passenger growth and demand, with the CAA's latest evidence demonstrating that 2025 was the busiest year ever for UK aviation, with over 300 million passengers travelling through UK airports which is a major milestone breaking records set before the pandemic. This trend looks set to continue, with the latest wave of the annual Aviation Consumer Survey revealing that nearly one-in-three (31%) are planning to fly more in 2026 and that overall satisfaction with the journey has reached 88%, the strongest result since the Survey began in 2016. While this evidence is encouraging, indicating strong consumer demand, confidence and satisfaction, the latest Survey findings also found a number of areas where the story was less positive, including for disabled and vulnerable passengers, which should be explored and addressed.

The first quarter of 2026 also demonstrated a similar positive upwards trend in passenger demand, with more than 61 million passengers flying through UK airports, breaking previous records for travel between January and March. Notably, this period includes the initial period after the Middle East conflict started. This indicates that despite ongoing global uncertainty caused by the conflict, demand for flying in the first quarter of 2026 remained high, although this will need to be reassessed when new data is available.

Since the conflict started, there has been extensive media coverage on issues including: the availability, supply and price of jet fuel, airspace restrictions, rerouting, reduced summer schedules and the risk of disruption and cancellations, as well as speculation on the implications the conflict could have for the aviation industry and consumers this summer and beyond. At the time of drafting this report, the impact of the conflict is still unfolding. There is speculation and emerging reports of last-minute bookings; increased airfares and fuel surcharges to offset rising costs; higher cancellations; and a shift towards domestic and short-haul travel. However, at present, there is too much uncertainty to form a view on whether these signals could develop into widespread trends across the sector or impact air travel demand and consumer confidence later in 2026 and beyond.

While the conflict presents significant uncertainty and complex challenges for industry stakeholders to navigate, we welcome the proactive approach taken by the government and CAA to protect consumers from the impact of the conflict this summer.⁵ We also welcome the CAA's latest advice and guidance to consumers on their rights and to airlines on their obligations to consumers including in relation to jet fuel surcharges. We will continue to monitor the situation and work with the CAA and others on how the summer season unfolds to understand the fuller impact on consumer demand and confidence.

In more positive news, at the time of drafting this report, we are delighted to be able to report the introduction of a new Aviation Bill. The Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill will cover a broad suite of measures:

- That strengthen aviation consumer rights and protections, allowing the CAA to take direct enforcement action for breaches of air passenger rights and general consumer law, without the need for court action; and provision of aviation consumer reforms through secondary legislation, for example, to potentially mandate Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).
- On airport slot regulation, airspace modernisation, aviation safety regulatory reform, including delegating technical rulemaking to the CAA, and aviation safety criminal sanctions.

In recent years, we have strongly advocated for the CAA to be given direct consumer powers akin to other regulators so the introduction of the Bill marks a watershed moment, which has the potential to transform the future consumer landscape and improve outcomes for consumers. We would like to acknowledge and thank the CAA and government colleagues for their significant work to support the introduction of the Bill and look forward to providing support over the coming months and years on the development and implementation of the Bill.

Other key developments

The terms of two Panel members sadly ended in March 2026. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jackie Minor and David Thomas for their valuable contributions to the Panel since 2018. Their contributions will be much missed, but we are delighted to welcome Hugh O'Keeffe and Hugh Kelly who joined the Panel in April 2026.

⁵ Key measures include: flight disruption management, allowing airlines to consolidate flights and adjust schedules to avoid chaotic last-minute cancellations; relaxing slot regulations at major airports to help airlines manage schedules without penalty during potential shortages, providing certainty to industry stakeholders; and clarifying passenger rights, to reinforce that consumers are entitled to choose between a full refund or re-routing if a flight is cancelled by the airline, along with the right to care and assistance for significant delays.

I would also like to thank the CAA's Aviation Security and the Consumer Protection teams for facilitating and organising five airport tours across different geographical regions including Belfast, Edinburgh and Luton airports, which gave Panel members valuable, practical insights into the end-to-end passenger journey.

Looking ahead

Given we have almost completed our current work programme and in light of the evolving, uncertain consumer landscape set out above, we will develop a new interim work programme. The key themes we intend to cover in the new work programme are set out below.⁶ Our future work plans will be shaped by the evolving consumer landscape, the latest evidence and ongoing and remaining work from current work programme. Within this context, we will remain flexible to new developments and adapt to future priorities.

My term as Chair of the Consumer Panel is also sadly coming to an end in December 2026. Over my eight and a half years as Chair there have been, and continue to be, a number of challenges facing aviation consumers, including navigating the Covid-19 pandemic and most recently the Middle East conflict. This latest conflict will be a test of the aviation sector's resilience and the strength of consumer demand and confidence to continue flying, and while it is creating a new wave of instability and uncertainty, the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated that the aviation sector is remarkably resilient and capable of learning lessons and bouncing back even stronger.

Overall, during my tenure, there has been significant progress in ensuring a fairer, more accessible, competitive, resilient and dynamic aviation landscape, that empowers consumers to make informed decisions to participate in the market and have better access to redress when things go wrong.

While the work continues, the Panel has played an important role as the CAA's critical friend in helping make aviation better for consumers. I would like to thank past and present Panel members and the CAA, including the CAA's Chair, Board, CEO and ExCo as well as other colleagues for their strong engagement with the Panel over the years. This has fostered a collaborative and constructive relationship between the Panel and CAA, helping ensure that aviation consumers remain at the heart of policy development and decisions.

The next two to three years will be crucial in shaping the future aviation landscape for consumers, which is likely to be a challenging, exciting and transformative period, with inevitable challenges to navigate, including the impact of the Middle East conflict, the development of innovative technologies, as well as the continued focus on growth alongside important environmental sustainability considerations.

To navigate such a broad range of competing factors shaping the future aviation landscape, the CAA will need to consider the consumer interest holistically through a

⁶ The new interim work programme will be published on the Panel's [webpage](#).

broad lens and also expand its focus on the interests of 'consumers of the future' who might purchase or use innovative technologies, and whose interests might not necessarily be aligned with current, potential or future passengers using commercial aviation.

Within this context, the Panel looks forward to continuing to play its role as the CAA's critical friend to help make aviation better for consumers in the ever-changing and ever-challenging aviation sector.

My very best wishes to the new Chair whose term will start in January 2027.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Willott' followed by a stylized flourish.

The Right Hon Jenny Willott OBE
CAA Consumer Panel Chair

Chapter 1

How we work

Our aims

The Panel exists to ensure the consumer interest is placed at the heart of the CAA's work, helping it uphold consumer choice, value and fair treatment and improve consumer outcomes. We want to see markets and regulation that focus on the clear interests of existing and future aviation consumers, and that work well to ensure effective airline competition on price and service quality. Airports should provide affordable, good quality and consumer-focused service; empowered consumers should be able to make informed decisions about which companies to use; airline services and airport environments should be designed and delivered to ensure accessibility to everyone, and people who may need extra help should be supported to make sure they can effectively access the market. And finally, when things go wrong, consumers should have quick, fair and easy access to redress.

How we prioritise our work

We are a small, specialist policy resource for the CAA delivering high quality, evidence-based advice in a way which is designed to maximise our impact. We therefore prioritise our work carefully, asking five key questions before embarking on any given project:

- Is the issue important for aviation consumers?
- Does it fall within the Panel's remit?
- Is it an area where the CAA is best placed to effect change?
- Is it (or should it be) a priority for the CAA?
- Is it an area where the consumer voice is less understood or not represented which could benefit from additional focus?

We also prioritise the interests of consumers we consider to be at greater risk of vulnerability throughout our work.

Chapter 2

Understanding our impact

This report covers the year to 31 March 2026. Over this period, we have continued to deliver our November 2024 – November 2026 work programme by building the evidence base, driving better outcomes for consumers and influencing future frameworks.

The overarching focus of our work programme is on navigating the ‘post-pandemic’ aviation landscape. As part of this, we intended to explore the following themes:

- Reversing the steady decline and improving consumer satisfaction with their overall travel experience, particularly in respect of delay and poor customer service, and regional dissatisfaction in Northern Ireland and Scotland.
- Improving consumer education, confidence and trust in respect of passenger rights and redress, sustainability and innovation, through the provision of information and consumer engagement and research.
- Continuing to focus on accessibility to ensure broad and diverse consumer participation in the market, and considering how to mitigate the potential risks of exclusionary effects from wider economic, technological and regulatory changes so that those who want to travel can continue to do so.
- Start considering with the CAA and others, the interactions and trade-offs between competing aviation policy objectives relating to the delivery of a growing, thriving and competitive aviation sector and the benefits this brings to consumers and the wider economy, alongside meeting sustainability goals including those related to climate change, which is one of the biggest challenges facing the aviation sector. As part of this, it will be important to consider how such trade-offs can be made in a fair and equitable way, and to shine a light on the real human impact future policies in this area could have.

Below we set out the work we have undertaken over the reporting year against our work programme and in response to new developments. Given we have almost completed our current work programme and in light of the evolving, uncertain consumer landscape set out above, we will develop a new interim work programme. The key themes we intend to cover in the new work programme are set out below. Our future work plans will be shaped by the evolving consumer landscape, the latest evidence and ongoing and remaining work from current work programme. Within this context, we will remain flexible to new developments and adapt to future priorities.

We have a number of important relationships with a range of stakeholders. As well as the CAA, these include industry representative bodies, other regulatory consumer panels, consumer organisations and third sector bodies. As a small policy advisory body embedded within the CAA, these relationships allow us to work collaboratively and maximise our influence with decision makers. The stakeholders we met over the course of the year are listed in Chapter 3.

Building the evidence base

In order to develop policy that reflects consumers' priorities and needs, and is correctly targeted, a strong evidence base is key. Our work programme committed us to continue inputting to the design of the Aviation Consumer Survey⁷ (the Survey) as our primary source of evidence on the consumer experience, and other relevant consumer research that is commissioned by the CAA. We have also expanded our evidence base to draw on other relevant insights to compare and contrast, and triangulate findings from different sources. This helps build a richer picture of consumer sentiment towards air travel, including rapidly evolving areas such as sustainability and innovation and ensures there is an informed basis upon which to develop policy in the best interests of consumers.

In addition, we continue to draw on relevant CAA data and insights including the Aviation Trends⁸ quarterly publication, passenger complaints data⁹ as well as the CAA's Airport and Airline Accessibility Performance Frameworks.

In general, our input to consumer research involves providing advice on survey questions and areas to explore, providing feedback on developing outputs, offering insights and analysis on key findings and considering how such findings (and the data that supports them) can be used across the CAA, and more broadly across the aviation sector and government, to inform policy development.

Aviation Consumer Survey 2025 – Wave 14

We provided support on the latest wave of the Survey in 2025 (wave 14), working closely with Savanta (as the CAA's appointed market research agency) and the CAA. This included helping shape a number of the questions posed to consumers on their travelling experience, providing advice on new questions and areas to explore, and offering insights and analysis of the results. In particular, the Panel helped review the mix of pre-existing questions and new topical questions to ensure the Survey had continuity and comparability with previous waves, while also considering emerging trends and possible changes in consumer behaviour. In particular, we suggested the CAA considers a stronger focus on consumer vulnerability as per the broader approach set out in the Vulnerability Toolkit and on disruption, building on Yonder's research set out below.

⁷ See [Aviation Consumer Survey](#).

⁸ See [Aviation Trends](#).

⁹ See [Passenger Complaints Data](#).

The Survey provides detailed insights into consumer flying behaviours and attitudes. It captures key metrics on overall satisfaction with the flying experience, including for passengers who are disabled or vulnerable; different stages of the passenger journey; complaints handling; as well as the experiences of vulnerable consumers and those requiring assistance. Other themes explored in this year's Survey include consumer priorities, expectations on value for money and awareness of hidden costs; travel disruption and how complaints are managed; and attitudes towards aviation and the environment. Among other things, the Survey found:

Flight behaviour and frequency

- Consumers are flying in the highest numbers since the Survey began in 2016, with 62% having flown in the last 12 months, matching last year's record high numbers.
- Recent flyers continue to skew significantly younger than before the pandemic, with younger people also remaining much more likely to fly frequently. Although the gap between younger and older consumers has narrowed slightly since 2024, this only points to a marginal increase.
- Looking ahead, more consumers plan to increase their flying in 2026 than to reduce it, with growth led primarily by younger age groups. In contrast, older consumers generally expect their flying habits to remain unchanged.

Overall satisfaction

- Satisfaction with the overall travel experience has risen to 88%, its highest level since the Survey began in 2016, although this is notably lower for certain vulnerability passenger groups – such as disabled passengers or those with accessibility needs (82%), those facing digital barriers (80%) and financial constraints (80%).

The experience of vulnerable passengers and those with accessibility needs and disabilities

- Despite high satisfaction with the travel experience, even among vulnerable groups, consumers with specific vulnerabilities and disabilities face different challenges when flying:
 - Nearly six in ten (58%) of disabled consumers report difficulty accessing or using airports and flying, with the most common needs being help with walking, standing, or managing luggage. These persistent challenges contribute to a lower flying frequency compared to consumers who do not report having a disability.
 - Complaint handling is the area with the largest disparity—only 66% of disabled passengers are satisfied, compared with 74% of non-disabled passengers.

- The need for support continues to act as a barrier to air travel participation, with those who have not flown in the last 12 months most likely to require help at the airport or during their flight:
 - Passengers with non-visible and physical disabilities are consistently the most likely to require some form of assistance.
 - 80% of digitally vulnerable passengers anticipate requiring support with technology, such as check-in kiosks.
 - 70% of those facing language or communication challenges are likely to need help understanding instructions or airport procedures.

Consumer priorities, value for money and hidden charges

- Affordability remains the most frequently cited barrier to flying in the last 12 months (36%) and the cost of flying remains the most widespread priority for consumers, with 52% rating it as their top concern, but overall satisfaction with value for money has increased to 76%, returning to pre-pandemic levels.
- Over half of respondents also reported making use of lower cost options such as choosing a less convenient flight time or travelling with hand luggage only.
- While most passengers believe they understand what's included in their airfare, awareness of different products or services at the point of booking is uneven and may reflect the varied ways airlines present and charge for extras.

Travel disruption and complaint handling

- Recent flyers reported slightly fewer travel problems than last year (55% in 2025 vs. 58% in 2024). However, 54% of respondents report not being informed of their rights by the airport or airline when they experienced a travel problem. Moreover, respondents showed an inconsistent understanding of entitlement terms related to air travel and disruption, highlighting uncertainty around the distinctions and correct application of "refund," "compensation," and "reimbursement."
- While the number of consumers making complaints following disruption has remained stable (15% in 2025 vs. 16% in 2024), satisfaction with complaints handling has notably increased to 72% (+10pp from last year).

Aviation and the environment

- Similar to last year, three quarters (75% in 2025 vs. 74% in 2024) of respondents said that they are concerned about the environment and climate change at present but relatively few respondents were willing to fly less or pay more to offset the environmental impact of flying.

- Around one third of consumers believe it is the airline's responsibility to cover the environmental impact of aviation; however, a quarter feel this cost should be built into the price of the ticket.

While this evidence is encouraging, indicating strong consumer confidence and satisfaction, we are mindful that there are areas where the story was less positive, including for disabled passengers and those in vulnerable circumstances. We believe it would be useful to explore these issues in future waves of the Survey.

We would like to thank Savanta for presenting at our January 2026 Panel meeting. We are also pleased that the Survey's findings were considered at CAA Senior Executive meetings. Consistent with our commitment to share learnings with other bodies, we have shared the latest wave with external stakeholders, other consumer panels and regulators.

We look forward to supporting the CAA's work on the next wave of the Survey (wave 15) which will be undertaken by a new market research agency in autumn 2026.

Yonder research on airline communication with passengers during disruption (July 2025)

Following publication of the NATS Independent Review's Final Report, the CAA commissioned Yonder to undertake consumer research into communication with passengers during disruption. Building on our earlier advice to the CAA on the draft brief, we continued to contribute, including by helping shape the draft questionnaire and we offered insights and analysis of the results. We also offered advice on the accessibility of the report before publication, to ensure it was screen reader compatible. Key findings include:

- Only 10% of respondents said they felt fully informed about their rights in the event of a flight disruption.
- Nearly two thirds of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with communications and over half (57%) of passengers felt that airlines providing more detailed information during disruption would have improved their experience.
- First notification is a critical moment to get right, with nearly half (45%) of passengers being actively dissatisfied with how the disruption they faced was initially communicated.
- 57% of passengers wanted more information during disruption, and 56% wanted more frequent communication - only one third (34%) of passengers were satisfied with the frequency of updates they received from their airline.
- Passengers who are not satisfied with their communications are more likely to claim some form of compensation or reimbursement, compared to those who are satisfied with communications (36% of those dissatisfied with communication attempted to claim for compensation, versus 27% of those satisfied).

- SMS text is the preferred channel for the first notification of delay for 64% of passengers, as it does not rely on internet connection, which many passengers abroad may not have.
- Despite 92% of passengers claiming to check flight status before arriving at the airport, over 2 in 5 found out about their disruption through airport speakers / boards.
- Nearly 1 in 10 (7%) of passengers who experienced a flight cancellation rather than a delay ended up cancelling their trip entirely.

Other insights

As set out above, our work programme committed to draw on other relevant insights from different sources to help build a richer picture of consumer sentiment towards air travel, including:

The NATS Aviation Index¹⁰ – eighth edition

Key findings included:

- Just over half (52%) of respondents reported flying internationally in the past 12 months, while 32% flew domestically. Looking ahead, 26% expect to fly more often in the next 12 months, but cost remains the dominant influence on travel decisions, with 89% saying it plays an important role in whether or not they choose to fly.
- Environmental concerns remain a top priority, expectations around how the industry should respond, and which actions to prioritise, appear to be changing. While 56% believe reducing emissions should be a key focus, an even greater share (63%) cites on-time performance as their top priority. Although around a third of respondents (33%) say they are willing to avoid domestic flights or use public transport to and from airports in the UK, an equal number admit to taking no personal action to reduce aviation's environmental impact.
- Looking to the future, public openness to emerging technologies is growing. Support for flying taxis has increased significantly— from 34% in 2024 to 40% in 2025—despite some continuing concerns around safety and cost. Drone use for public services is widely accepted, particularly for emergency response (86%) and infrastructure inspection (81%).
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) in transport and travel is viewed with cautious optimism. While nearly half (49%) express concern about public safety, 68% support AI being

¹⁰ See [Aviation Index 2025](#).

used for baggage screening, and 50% approve of its use in air traffic and route management.

Latest Aviation Trends

- The latest Aviation Trends¹¹ shows UK aviation had the highest ever passenger numbers in the first quarter of 2026, with more than 61 million passengers travelling through UK airports in the first three months of this year, breaking previous records for travel between January and March. This period includes the initial period after the Middle East conflict started, impacting passengers in some regions.
- A similar positive upward trend was seen in 2025, with 302 million passenger journeys through UK airports, which is a significant increase on the 295 million passenger journeys reported in 2024. 2025 also saw flight delays continue to drop, with 73% of flights operating on-time, up six percentage points on 2024, although still behind pre-pandemic levels.

Innovation and strategic research

The latest strategic research on innovation and horizon scanning included:

- The government commissioned research in 2025¹² into the potential development and economic impact of uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) and advanced air mobility (AAM). It created a series of scenarios to: identify the barriers that affect both sectors; explore areas of uncertainty that could be faced; and assess the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for the UK.
- The CAA has also published a Strategic Insight Report exploring how quantum technologies are set to transform the aerospace sector.¹³ The CAA also convened a horizon scanning workshop to explore the future operating landscape for aviation, which brought together diverse perspectives across government, CAA and industry, including the Panel.¹⁴

CAA consumer insight work

We have continued to make the case for the CAA to conduct a gap analysis and use this to inform decisions on what further targeted research is needed in order to understand the aviation consumer experience. In particular, as part of our work to encourage the CAA to further embed the consumer interest across the organisation, we recommended the

¹¹ See [Aviation Trends](#).

¹² See [Future of Flight Scenarios Futures Research Report](#).

¹³ See [CAP3200](#).

¹⁴ See [CAP3260](#).

creation of a cross-CAA ‘consumer research and insights’ hub to foster a more joined up approach to gathering, sharing and utilising consumer insights.

In light of the rapid pace of change around aerospace innovation, we suggest the CAA undertakes specific research to better understand consumer perceptions, attitudes and acceptance of new technologies¹⁵ as this seems to be a gap in the CAA’s knowledge base. In addition, it will be important for the CAA to expand its focus on the interests of ‘the consumer of the future’ who might purchase or use innovative technologies, and whose interests might not necessarily be aligned with current, potential or future passengers using commercial aviation.

Another key area we suggest the CAA should prioritise is strategic research and intelligence, including horizon scanning. Earlier this year, we were pleased to participate in the horizon scanning workshop noted above and welcome the CAA’s proactive work in this space. However, we suggest a stronger consumer focus is needed in this area to explore how future signals and trends could impact consumers, in terms of potential risks, benefits and opportunities.

Sharing learning

We have continued to build good relationships and share learnings with external bodies, including other consumer panels, the CAA’s Environmental Sustainability Panel and regulators including the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

In recent months, we have also engaged with the Director of UKRI’s Future Flight Challenge Social Science Research Programme at the University of Birmingham to discuss the latest Future of Flight research and trends, and have promoted this work across the CAA. As noted above, we have continued to advocate the importance of understanding consumer sentiment and attitudes in innovation and Future of Flight, and encourage the CAA and UKRI to continue to share insights and work together on this important issue.

The Chairs of four independent consumer panels and the Advertising Advisory Committee also met to discuss common themes and areas of interest including the government’s growth agenda and greenwashing.

Concluding comments

The evidence noted above has helped build a stronger evidence base of consumers’ priorities and needs as part of the post-pandemic aviation landscape.

¹⁵ This should build on research undertaken by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in 2024.

See [Future Flight Survey 2024](#) and [Principles from a Deliberative Public Dialogue, July 2024](#).

Driving better outcomes for consumers

Our focus is on improving the aviation experience for current and future aviation consumers. Whilst a key concern is price, it is also important that accessible, useful, comparable information on quality is available so that consumers are able to make informed comparisons and vote with their feet. Where outcomes are regulated or influenced by the CAA, our aim is to ensure that the consumer interest is reflected throughout the policy development and regulatory design process, and as part of monitoring, compliance and enforcement. In particular, the needs of consumers at risk of vulnerability should be taken fully into account so they can participate in the market effectively, and consumers need to be able to seek quick and fair resolution when things go wrong, with complaints data used systematically by industry to inform improvements over time.

We are pleased to have provided support, advice and guidance to the CAA on several strands of work this year. Overall, we feel we have had particular impact in the area of innovation, economic regulation, accessibility and consumer vulnerability and embedding the consumer interest across the CAA which has been a key area of focus this year.

In addition to progressing our work programme, we have seen an increase in other work being brought proactively to the Panel for input from across the CAA's wide remit. We have also seen growing interest from colleagues across the CAA, including ExCo and Board members, asking to observe formal Panel meetings. These trends suggest the Panel's visibility and impact across the CAA is continuing to grow, which is encouraging.

Consumer satisfaction

- As noted above, we are pleased that the latest wave of the Survey demonstrates a continued upward trend, with overall satisfaction of the travel experience rising to 88%, its highest level since the Survey began in 2016. However, this is notably lower for certain vulnerable passenger groups – such as those with accessibility or disability needs (82%), those facing digital barriers (80%) and financial constraints (80%).
- We also welcome the increase in satisfaction with complaint handling (+10pp to 72% in 2025). However, while satisfaction with complaint handling is on an upward trend, it continues to be an area with lower satisfaction relative to other parts of the passenger journey, such as the process of booking flights, and is therefore still an area of concern for the Panel and where further improvement is needed.
- In future waves, it will be important to explore these issues, in particular how to improve those parts of passenger journey with lower levels of satisfaction and the satisfaction and experience of vulnerable consumers.

Consumer protection, alternative dispute resolution and legislative reform

- As noted above, this reporting year has been a period of significant change. We provided input at the CAA's June 2025 and January 2026 Board meetings on progress against the CAA's expanded consumer protection work programme. We continue to be very supportive of the additional investment in the Consumer Protection team and welcome the progress made over the last year in respect of several new projects to which we have input, including:
 - The launch of the CAA's new UK261 Compliance Programme, which focuses on airlines' compliance with obligations under UK261 legislation when consumers face flight disruption.¹⁶
 - Yonder's research on improved communications with consumers during disruption, and follow-on work to ensure they are better informed and empowered to make decisions when disruption occurs.
 - The independent review of CAA-approved ADR schemes, which has been published.¹⁷
 - More generally, lived experience of disability on the Panel has helped highlight the risks of digital exclusion and screen reader compatibility across the CAA's work and publications, which has created more awareness and understanding of this important issue across the organisation.

At the time of drafting this report, we are delighted to be able to report the introduction of a new Aviation Bill. The Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill, introduced in the King's Speech in May 2026, will cover a broad suite of measures that strengthen aviation consumer rights and protections, allowing the CAA to take direct enforcement action for breaches of air passenger rights and general consumer law, without the need for court action, and provision of aviation consumer reforms through secondary legislation, for example to potentially mandate ADR.

For many years, we have strongly advocated for the CAA to be given direct consumer powers akin to other regulators, so the introduction of the Bill marks a watershed moment which has the potential to transform the future consumer landscape and further improve outcomes for consumers. We would like to acknowledge and thank government and CAA colleagues for their significant work to support the introduction of the Bill and look forward to providing support over the coming months and years on the development and implementation of the Bill.

¹⁶ See [link](#).

¹⁷ See [CAP3211](#).

Accessibility and consumer vulnerability

Over this reporting year, we feel we have had particular impact in the area of accessibility and consumer vulnerability. We have continued to prioritise and advocate the needs of consumers at risk of vulnerability and those with accessibility needs throughout our work. In particular:

- We have provided input on the CAA's first review under its Airline Accessibility Performance Framework, its proposed approach to updating the Airport Accessibility Performance Framework and the Wheelchair (Mobility Aid) Damage consultation.
- We have continued to contribute to the Aviation Accessibility Task and Finish Group (AATFG), helping shape AATFG report recommendations as well contributing to the Aviation Accessibility Implementation Group (AAIG).
- We have also promoted the Vulnerability Toolkit and Consumer Principles across the CAA, in areas including the Aviation Consumer Survey, the Law Commission's project on autonomy in aviation and as part of work to further embed the consumer interest across the CAA. As part of this, we have provided advice and guidance to the CAA on its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 and Equality Impact Assessments, and look forward to contributing to this area over the coming year.
- More generally, lived experience of disability on the Panel has helped highlight the risks of digital exclusion and screen reader compatibility across the CAA's work and publications. We have also undertaken screen reader compatibility testing for specific CAA publications and will shortly be testing the CAA's planned website relaunch which intends to deliver a more intuitive and consumer friendly digital experience, shaped by user needs and evidence.

Environmental sustainability

We have continued to input to various strands of work in the area of environmental sustainability:

- We have once again input into the CAA's Aviation Environmental Review (AER), by exploring what information is likely to be of interest to consumers, and how this information should be presented, contextualised and promoted in an accessible format. We provided feedback on the AER roadmap, including what consumers want to know now and in the future, and whether there is scope to link the AER to the CAA's consumer environmental information framework which is now published. We welcome the publication of the framework, which is an important piece of work that the Panel has contributed to and helped shape over several years.

- We provided input on the CAA's Environmental Sustainability Strategy refresh, advising on the importance of building consumer confidence and trust in respect of environmental information to inform consumer choices and decisions around sustainability, and addressing greenwashing.
- We have also worked with the Environmental Sustainability Panel on cross-cutting issues such as environmental information and greenwashing, highlighting the importance of considering sustainability and consumer issues in a holistic way that considers interactions and trade-offs. As part of this, we are undertaking desktop research on the extent of misleading environmental information and potential greenwashing in the aviation sector, drawing on discussions with and evidence from the ASA and CMA.

Innovation

Over this reporting year, we have been involved in various strands of work across the area of innovation:

- We have continued to input into the Law Commission's project looking at autonomy in the aviation sector. We held a workshop with the Law Commission to discuss our earlier substantive submission to its consultation and next steps. In particular, we raised the importance of building consumer and public acceptance, confidence and trust in future flight technologies through iterative research and engagement alongside the development of a new regulatory framework. We were pleased to hear the Law Commission took on board our advice to engage with the Director of UKRI's Future Flight Challenge Social Science Research Programme at the University of Birmingham about consumer attitudes on societal readiness, and public perceptions towards future flight technologies.
- Among other issues, we discussed with the Law Commission how to embed a stronger consumer focus, including interactions between the Consumer Principles and AI Principles and how consumer vulnerability and existing consumer protection and accessibility frameworks could be considered and adapted to a crewed and uncrewed VTOL context. The Law Commission's final recommendations were published in May 2026.¹⁸
- We continue to work with the CAA as it develops its approach to the regulation of AI in aviation and its use in the CAA, following the publication of its AI strategy and an AI/Consumer Principles 'think piece' we helped develop last year. The CAA's latest work on AI and its approach to strategic research and intelligence was presented to the Panel earlier this year. More recently, we have worked with CAA colleagues to help map out how AI is being and could be used across the end-to-end passenger

¹⁸ See [link](#).

journey, and what this could mean for consumers in terms of potential benefits, opportunities, risks and challenges. We are mindful that the use of AI is gathering pace across the industry and has the potential to have wide reaching implications for consumers. This is also a key area of focus for the government in the context of its growth agenda noted above, as a key enabler to unlock innovation and productivity. We will continue to input and provide advice in this important area.

- We also participated in horizon scanning discussions with CAA colleagues to understand the latest signals and trends, including topics such as quantum technologies, digital twins, neuromorphic computing and metaverse technologies in aviation, to explore potential implications for the CAA, the industry and consumers. As noted above, we participated in a horizon scanning workshop to explore the future operating landscape for aviation, which brought together diverse perspectives across government, CAA and industry.¹⁹

Aviation Security

- We have had a particular focus on Aviation Security (AvSec) this reporting year, including proactive engagement with CAA AvSec colleagues who have presented at Panel meetings on various topics including human factors, aviation security training and updates to aviation security regulations following the introduction of new screening technologies across UK airports. We welcome the CAA's additional work on the screening of passengers with accessibility requirements, disabilities, non-visible disabilities or who may wear medical devices such as stoma pouches or insulin pumps, following the introduction of new screening technologies.
- We also welcome the enhanced collaboration and engagement between AvSec and the Consumer Protection team and across the CAA more broadly, as well as with industry and charities to address issues raised by the new screening technologies. We were also particularly pleased to contribute to discussions around extending the medical device awareness card and promoting awareness of the card to consumers. More recently, we held a workshop with AvSec colleagues on their proposed approach to AvSec Risk Based Oversight.
- We would also like to thank AvSec and the Consumer Protection team for facilitating and organising five airport tours across different geographical regions including Belfast International, Edinburgh and Luton airports, which gave Panel members valuable, practical insights into the end to end passenger journey, as well as the opportunity to speak to frontline staff.

¹⁹ See [CAP3260](#).

Safety

- Similar to our earlier input on a CAA Safety Risks Assurance Board Paper, we were asked to provide input on a draft ExCo paper setting out the Safety and Airspace Regulation Group's approach to European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) rulemaking activity. While we do not have technical safety expertise and much of this work is outside our remit, we welcomed the opportunity to highlight implications this work could have for consumers and suggest possible mitigations, which should be guided by the overarching objective of maintaining a high standard of consumer confidence and trust in the safety of aviation.
- More recently, we were approached to provide a consumer perspective on the CAA's National Aviation Safety Plan (NASP) to ensure it reflects a consumer focus, and provide assurance on its accessibility, readability and screen reader compatibility.

Independent Review of NATS (En Route) Plc's Flight Planning System Failure in August 2023

- We have continued to input on the NATS Independent Review Report recommendations, providing independent validation of the CAA's approach to implementing relevant recommendations that relate to its safety, economic regulation, consumer protection and resilience roles. The Panel has been consulted on relevant milestones over this reporting year and a status report on the air traffic control failure was published in May 2026²⁰ with two recommendations remaining open. In June 2026 a final addendum to this report was submitted to the Department for Transport noting that all recommendations are now closed or embedded into operational regulatory practices.

Economic regulation

- We have continued to contribute to the CAA's approach to the Heathrow airport price control review (H8). This includes advising on the team's approach to consumer research and how this has been used to inform the H8 Business Plan and investment decisions, learning lessons from the H7 process as well as Outcome Based Regulation.
- In recent months, we have also engaged with CAA colleagues on the potential expansion of runway capacity at Heathrow airport and its implications for consumers, providing assurance to the CAA Board on the CAA's work in this area.
- As part of the NR28 price control process for NATS (En Route) Plc, we provided advice to the CAA on draft research methodology proposals, as well as reviewing

²⁰ See [CAP3193](#).

and providing feedback on the research findings in a joint workshop with the CAA, NERL and NERL's research agency, and we have also engaged with the CAA on its draft method statement and draft business plan guidance.

Other work

We contributed to the development of the CAA's Annual Strategic Objectives for 2026/27 to ensure they retain a strong consumer focus, provided feedback on the CAA's approach to managing consumer risks and engaged with the CAA's General Counsel on the CAA's legal approach to its consumer protection work. We also contributed to the CAA's ongoing work on ATOL reform, held workshops with colleagues on the Customer Experience and Modernisation Programme and the State of Industry project. The Panel's Chair also participated in the CAA Board's Effectiveness Review.

Influencing future frameworks

As set out above, we have seen a number of strategic and regulatory developments shaping the 'post-pandemic' landscape over this reporting year. Within this context, we have sought to improve consumer outcomes by ensuring the right future frameworks are in place – including those noted above.

Embedding the consumer interest across the CAA

Over this reporting year, a key area of focus has been on embedding the consumer interest across the CAA.

By way of context, in December 2024, the CAA's Chair asked the Consumer Panel to consider how the CAA could embed the consumer interest across the CAA and deliver more for consumers. Among other points, we recommended the CAA:

- Builds a cross-organisation 'consumer network' that embeds targeted consumer focused resource to promote a better understanding of the consumer interest in different policy areas, informed by a systematic 'consumer interest' mapping exercise across the organisation, and wider application of the Consumer Principles and Vulnerability Toolkit.
- Creates a cross-CAA 'consumer research and insights' hub to foster a more joined up approach to gathering, sharing and utilising consumer insights.
- Reviews its approach to risk appetite on consumer matters and considers whether further consumer focused training and education across the CAA could be beneficial.
- Considers updating its 2023 Consumer Strategy to reflect these developments.

As a first step, we suggested a mapping exercise is undertaken to identify how the consumer interest is currently understood and considered across the CAA. An internal survey was developed by the CAA, with significant input from the Panel, which was completed by colleagues across the CAA in late 2025. The survey found a mixed picture

regarding the extent to which the consumer interest is currently understood and considered across the organisation, with several positive examples and some gaps which require further focus. We welcome the CAA's work in progressing the survey, and consider the findings provide a useful platform for further work and cross-CAA collaboration.

Using this evidence as a baseline and our broader experience of engaging with colleagues across the CAA on a range of different policy areas that relate to the consumer interest, we developed a suite of recommendations for the CAA to consider how it can further embed the consumer interest across the organisation. We look forward to working with the CAA to progress these recommendations and would like to thank colleagues for their proactive and constructive approach in responding to the Panel's feedback.

As part of this work, we also welcome the CAA's recognition of the importance of considering the consumer interest as part of its new cross-CAA economic analysis and impact assessment work and look forward to contributing to this area in due course.

Priorities for 2026 - 2027

Given we have almost completed our current work programme and in light of the evolving, uncertain consumer landscape set out above, we will develop new interim work programme.

The key themes we intend to cover in the new work programme are set out below. Our future work plans will be shaped by the evolving consumer landscape, the latest evidence, and ongoing and remaining work from current work programme. Within this context, we will remain flexible to new developments and adapt to future priorities.

Key themes include:

- Considering the potential impact and implications for consumers that might arise from the Middle East conflict. This includes exploring the impact of rising costs, which is a remaining area of focus in the current work programme.
- Supporting the CAA to deliver its six priorities for 2026-27 as set out by the Secretary of State for Transport, including supporting the CAA to consider the interactions and potential trade-offs between different priorities and policy areas.
- Government's growth agenda, including supporting the CAA's work on airport expansion at Heathrow airport in the context of the recently published Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS)²¹ as well as cross-CAA economic advisory work noted above to ensure this has a strong consumer focus.

²¹ See [link](#).

- Supporting the CAA on the new Aviation Bill and wider legislative reforms.
- Innovation, including AI and other strands of work in the Future of Flight. As part of this, we will work with the CAA to explore and consider the interests of ‘the consumer of the future’ who might purchase or use innovative technologies, and whose interests might not necessarily be aligned with current, potential or future passengers using commercial aviation.
- Continuing to support work to further embed the consumer interest across the CAA.

We will also continue to input to other ongoing areas of work, including economic regulation, consumer protection and accessibility, sustainability and the Aviation Consumer Survey.

The Consumer Panel’s interim work programme will be published on its webpage.²²

²² See [link](#).

Chapter 3

Transparency

Expenditure

The Panel cost the CAA £84,501.93 in fees and expenses this reporting year.

Panel meetings

Over this reporting year, the Panel met formally four times. The minutes of these meetings are published²³ on the CAA website. In addition, a number of sub-groups of the Panel worked on individual workstreams throughout the year aligned to the Panel's work programme. The Panel works in an agile and flexible manner across the CAA to help colleagues understand the consumer interest in their particular policy area and responds to requests for written feedback as they arise.

Terms of Reference

The Panel's Terms of Reference are published on the CAA website.²⁴

Working with stakeholders

The Panel primarily interacts with the CAA, providing advice and engaging with staff at all levels. In 2025-2026, as part of its work with stakeholders the Panel also engaged with:

- Advertising Standards Authority and the Advertising Advisory Committee
- Airlines UK
- ATIPAC (Air Travel Insolvency Protection Advisory Committee) Chair
- Competition and Markets Authority
- Department for Transport
- Communications Consumer Panel
- Environmental Sustainability Panel
- Financial Services Consumer Panel
- Law Commission
- Legal Services Consumer Panel
- UKRI (UK Research and Innovation)

²³ See [Consumer Panel webpage](#).

²⁴ See [Consumer Panel Terms of Reference](#).

Chapter 4

Panel members and secretariat

Chair

Rt Hon Jenny Willott OBE (term ends in December 2026)

Jenny was appointed to the Panel in January 2018. Jenny was the Member of Parliament for Cardiff Central for ten years, serving as Consumer Affairs Minister, with responsibilities including consumer policy, competition policy and employment law, Women and Equalities Minister and as a Government Whip. She is now the Chief Executive of the charity Re-engage and a Non-Executive Director of St Oscar Romero multi-academy trust. She was formerly the Director of Enterprise and Innovation at St Mary's University, Twickenham, and until December 2020 was a Non-Executive Director for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. Prior to entering Parliament, she worked in the voluntary sector, including as Chief Executive of Victim Support South Wales and Head of Advocacy for UNICEF UK.

Members

Professor Chris Gill

Chris Gill is Professor of Socio-Legal Studies at the University of Glasgow. Chris has expertise in access to justice, administrative justice, and consumer alternative dispute resolution. He has a particular interest in consumer voice and mechanisms for effective feedback, learning, and redress. Chris' research focuses on the experiences of consumers and citizens, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances. Previous projects have included examining access to justice for energy consumers in vulnerable circumstances and facing energy poverty and examining the barriers facing asylum seekers and refugees in accessing public services and making complaints. He is currently working on a project looking at the concept of "user focus" in English, Scottish, and British tribunals. Chris' research has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, the British Academy, Leverhulme, the Nuffield Foundation and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada). He sits on the Ombudsman Association's Validation Committee, the Administrative Justice Council's Academic Panel and the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission's Consumer Panel. Chris also works as a consultant specialising in justice research and innovation.

Jennifer Genevieve

Jennifer is a Deputy Director at the Office of Road and Rail, with responsibility for the ORR's Periodic Review of Network Rail. She has worked on economic regulation, competition policy and consumer protection within sector regulators and industry in roles spanning the rail, aviation, water, financial services, telecoms and broadcasting sectors. She was previously Head of Stakeholder Engagement & Policy at Thames Water, leading work on the business planning process for the industry price review. She has also worked on the setting of charges at airports across Europe as Head of Airport Regulation and Policy at easyJet. Jennifer served for six years as a member of the Financial Services Consumer Panel. She also previously worked in strategy and competition policy at Ofcom.

Rick Hill MBE

Rick has had a varied career in both the voluntary sector, film/tv industry and media regulation. Chairman of Northern Ireland Screen Commission 2008-2013, he took the lead role in developing digital content, supporting new programme and delivery formats in the film/tv sector. Rick has also worked in consumer advocacy. He was Chairman of the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland, a member of Consumer Focus UK Board and Chairman of the Scottish Government Consumer and Competition Working Group. He was Deputy Chairperson of the Independent Press Standards Organisation until 2020, and until recently Communications Consumer Panel Chairperson and the Northern Ireland Member. He is currently an independent member of the Strategic Panel for Non-Domestic Water, UK and an Adjudicator with COMREG, Ireland and the Chairperson of the Solicitors Complaints Committee, Northern Ireland.

Hugh Kelly (member since 1 April 2026)

Hugh is an independent consultant specialising in regulatory finance and competition. After an early career in project finance, he moved into economic regulation and competition finance, with roles at FTI Consulting, KPMG, and Ofcom amongst others. He currently serves as a non-executive board member and Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee at both the Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO) and Horder Healthcare, and sits as an Ordinary Member of the UK's Competition Appeal Tribunal. He is a chartered accountant and holds a BA in Economics and Accounting from the University of Kent.

Hugh O'Keeffe (member since 1 April 2026)

Hugh O'Keeffe is an Inclusion Lead at Onvero, where he advises employers on equality, governance and organisational policy. His work focuses particularly on disability inclusion, accessibility and ensuring that lived experience informs practical policy and organisational change. Alongside his professional work, Hugh has held a number of advisory and governance roles focused on disability and inclusion. He previously served as Chair of the Muscle Help Foundation, a charity supporting young people with muscle-wasting conditions, and has contributed to national policy and public service oversight through roles including the Metropolitan Police Disability Independent Advisory Group and the

Disability Confident Professional Advisors Group. Hugh is a disabled passenger and brings both professional expertise and lived experience to the Consumer Panel. He is particularly interested in improving accessibility across the aviation system and strengthening consumer voice in regulatory decision-making.

Jacqueline Minor (member until 31 March 2026)

Following a short period lecturing in law at the University of Leicester, Jacqueline Minor joined the European civil service, first at the European Court of Justice and subsequently at the European Commission. After more than 20 years' working on Internal Market issues, including a period as Director responsible for Consumer Policy, she served as Head of the Commission's Representation in the UK from 2013 until retirement in 2017.

Deborah Persaud

Deborah is a committed disability rights activist and currently Chair of Transport for All. She is also an independent board member at the National Centre for Accessible Transport. A former senior civil servant, working in a number of central government departments over a 35-year career specialising in social and economic policy including consumer affairs, she also travelled the world specialising in border control and customs. She has led corporate and infrastructure projects and has been responsible for turnaround and performance improvement programmes. She also provides organisational development consultancy. Outside of work, she is a Trustee of a heritage property, coaches small businesses and is sought after as a mentor. She travels the world as much as she can, and often takes her guide dog with her.

David Thomas (member until 31 March 2026)

David is a chartered accountant and an economist. He was appointed a specialist panel member at the Competition and Markets Authority in 2017, and in 2018 a member of competition and enforcement decision committees at the Payment Systems Regulator and the Financial Conduct Authority. Since 2016 he has run his own consulting practice focusing on economics, regulation and disputes, largely in the communications sector. David was a director of competition and regulatory finance at Ofcom where he had responsibility for, among other things, price controls. After leaving Ofcom he established and led KPMG's global economics and regulation practice.

James Walker

James is the founder of Resolver.co.uk, a free online complaints service that James grew to help over 18 million consumers a year to resolve their disputes. He has advised the Government on consumer issues and is a Board Member for Consumer Scotland, Collaboration Network and the Dispute Resolution Ombudsman. A winner of Social Entrepreneur of the year, James is a non-executive for a number of start-ups including Trusted Payments and a highly successful cashback app. His focus is on helping businesses deliver market-leading customer service, while helping consumers understand

and exercise their consumer rights. James also had three national weekly consumer columns.

Vaughan Williams

Vaughan is a consumer protection and regulatory lawyer with expertise in industry-based ADR and in regulatory compliance and enforcement. He currently works on redress matters in the Legal Division of the Financial Conduct Authority, and previously worked for a number of years at the energy regulator Ofgem where he was a senior lawyer in the enforcement team. He was previously Principal Investigator at the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman in his native Australia. Vaughan has also spent time in the community sector, having been Secretary of the Public Transport Users Association in Melbourne and representing that organisation on a number of advisory and advocacy bodies including the working party that established Victoria's Public Transport Ombudsman. He is a supervising lawyer at the Waterloo Legal Advice Service and sits as a magistrate on the South East London bench. Along with his legal background, Vaughan brings significant lived experience of disability and neurodiversity

Secretariat

Freya Whiteman

Freya is a Policy Principal in the CAA's Consumers and Markets Group, assigned to support the Panel. She is an experienced consumer, regulatory policy and legal professional who is passionate about making aviation more accessible for consumers, with a track record of delivering a number of CAA publications, consumer focused policies and legislative change. Previous roles include working in economic regulation on the H7 price control review to deliver a more consumer focused approach to service quality regulation (Outcome Based Regulation) and modernising the CAA's regulatory toolkit for NATS En Route Plc under the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021. More recently, she led on the CAA's airline website accessibility audit and the latest wave of the Aviation Consumer Survey.