

CAA Consumer Panel

Interim Work Programme: August 2026 – July 2027



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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

The Consumer Panel's last work programme was published in late 2024 covering a period of two years until November 2026. Its overriding focus was 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.

During this period, the Panel has made significant progress against its work programme, which is now largely complete. Our latest progress is set out in our recently published annual report for the year ended 31 March 2026.

In light of this and the evolving, uncertain consumer landscape we have seen in recent months, as well as my term as Panel Chair sadly ending in December 2026, we have developed a new interim work programme covering the period August 2026 – July 2027. Our interim work programme:

- Focuses on key themes and developments shaping the consumer landscape which are set out below in Chapter 3. These include the impact of the Middle East conflict; the new Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill which marks a watershed moment for the CAA and has the potential to transform the future consumer landscape and improve consumer outcomes; Heathrow expansion; and various developments in the space of consumer protection, accessibility, sustainability, growth and innovation.
- Covers remaining work from the 2024 - 2026 programme as well as ongoing work.
- Sets out the Panel's key areas of focus over the latter half of 2026 and in the first half of 2027 to facilitate a smooth transition and onboarding process for the Panel's new Chair whose term will start in January 2027 allowing time for a new, longer term work programme to be developed from August 2027 onwards.

Within this context, our work plans will be shaped by the evolving consumer landscape and the latest evidence and, as always, we will remain flexible to new developments and adapt to future priorities.

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, ensuring aviation consumers remain at the heart of policy development and decisions.

The period covered by this interim work programme 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 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 blue ink, reading "Jenny Willott".

The Right Hon Jenny Willott OBE
CAA Consumer Panel Chair

Chapter 1

The Panel's vision

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

Assessing the evidence

Introduction

In order to develop policy that reflects consumers' priorities and needs, and is correctly targeted, a strong evidence base is key. We will continue to draw on the CAA's Aviation Consumer 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 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 Trends¹ quarterly publication, passenger complaints data² as well as the CAA's Airport and Airline Accessibility Performance Frameworks.

At the time of drafting this work programme, we have been working with the CAA and its appointed consultant (Yonder) on the design of the next wave of the Aviation Consumer Survey (wave 15). Fieldwork will commence shortly and the results are expected to be published in early 2027. This means that we have relied on the findings from the previous wave, which was undertaken in autumn 2025 (wave 14), to help inform the evidence base for this work programme. However, we will use the latest findings from wave 15, when available, to help shape our work plans set out below.

Set out below are the key findings from the following research:

- Aviation Consumer Survey – wave 14
- Yonder research on airline communication with passengers during disruption
- The NATS Aviation Index – eighth edition
- The CAA's latest Aviation Trends
- Innovation and strategic research

¹ See [Aviation Trends](#).

² See [Passenger Complaints Data](#).

Aviation Consumer Survey

As noted above, our primary evidence base is the CAA's Aviation Consumer Survey (the Survey). This is an annual, nationally representative survey of 3,500 UK consumers which aims to provide an in-depth understanding of respondents' flying behaviours and attitudes towards travelling by air over time.

The Consumer Panel was instrumental in introducing and developing the Survey, which is a significant strategic tool for measuring key metrics across the aviation consumer journey and exploring emerging signals and trends that could impact consumers.

Aviation Consumer Survey 2025 - Wave 14

We worked closely with the CAA and its previous research agency, Savanta, to provide support on wave 14 of the Survey in Autumn 2025. Further detail on our input and the key findings are set out in our annual report for the year ended 31 March 2026. Key findings include:

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 vulnerable 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

- Similarly 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 this further in future waves of the Survey.

Other research

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 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.

NATS Aviation Index – eighth edition³

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

Latest Aviation Trends

The latest Aviation Trends⁴ shows UK aviation had the highest ever passenger numbers in the first quarter of 2026, with more than 61 million passengers travelling through UK

³ See [Aviation Index 2025](#).

⁴ See [Aviation Trends](#).

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 2025⁵ 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 sector⁶ and 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.⁷

⁵ See [Future of Flight Scenarios Futures Research Report](#).

⁶ See [CAP3200](#).

⁷ See [CAP3260](#).

Chapter 3

Interim work plans 2026 - 2027

Introduction

The Consumer Panel has made significant progress against its 2024 – 2026 work programme, which is now largely complete. Our latest progress is set out in our recently published annual report for the year ended 31 March 2026.

In light of this and the evolving, uncertain consumer landscape we have seen in recent months as well as the term of the Panel Chair's term ending in December 2026, we have developed a new interim work programme covering the period August 2026 – July 2027. Our interim work programme:

- Reflects the latest consumer evidence noted above.
- Focuses on the key themes and developments shaping the consumer landscape. These include the impact of the Middle East conflict, the new Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill, Heathrow expansion⁸ and various developments in the space of consumer protection, accessibility, sustainability, growth and innovation.
- Covers remaining work from the 2024 - 2026 programme as well as ongoing work.
- Sets out the Panel's key areas of focus over the latter half of 2026 and in the first half of 2027 to facilitate a smooth transition and onboarding process for the Panel's new Chair whose term will start in January 2027 allowing time for a new, longer term work programme to be developed from August 2027 onwards.

These plans are also aligned to the CAA's strategy and strategic focus areas⁹ and will also take into account the dynamic and fluid environment in which we are working. We will therefore remain flexible and if other issues arise, we will use the criteria set out in Chapter 1 to reprioritise work, if necessary.

Building the evidence base

As noted above, the Aviation Consumer Survey continues to be our primary source of evidence on the consumer experience. The Panel will continue to input to the design of the Survey and provide advice on new questions and areas to explore, and offer insights and analysis of the results. Fieldwork for wave 15 will commence shortly and the results are

⁸ The government has recently published its draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS). See [link](#).

⁹ See [link](#).

expected to be published in early 2027. We will use the latest findings from wave 15, when available, to help shape our work plans.

We will also draw on other insights, including those noted above, to compare and contrast, and triangulate findings from different sources. This will help build a richer picture of consumer sentiment towards air travel, including rapidly evolving areas such as sustainability and innovation. This in turn will help create a more informed platform upon which to develop policy in the best interests of consumers.

We will continue 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. We will also encourage the CAA to undertake consumer research in specific areas where we consider there are gaps, or a lack of understanding or where consumers are at particular risk, and would be happy to support such work.

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 technologies¹⁰ 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.

We will also continue to encourage the CAA to have a more joined-up approach to gathering and utilising data and research across the organisation (including making better use of existing information, insights and data) to help inform the CAA's priorities.

Driving better outcomes for consumers

We will continue to provide input to the CAA, and more widely, to help improve the experience of aviation consumers in our capacity as the CAA's critical friend on consumer matters. We will continue to work with the CAA and other consumer panels, government departments, aviation industry stakeholders, consumer representatives, accessibility groups and others to maximise our impact.

¹⁰ 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](#).

Key themes and work plans

In recent months, we have seen a number of strategic and regulatory developments shaping the consumer landscape which presents opportunities and challenges for consumers, the government, CAA and industry to navigate.

While we will remain flexible to these developments and adapt to future priorities and changes in the sector and wider economy as well as new consumer evidence, we intend to explore the following themes in our interim work programme:

- 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.
- Supporting the CAA on the new Aviation Bill and wider legislative reforms as well as transition arrangements to the new regime – with a particular focus on the CAA's readiness for a new direct consumer enforcement regime.
- Supporting the CAA's delivery of its expanded consumer protection work programme. This includes:
 - 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;
 - the CAA's planned review of its policy and approach towards Alternative Dispute Resolution; and
 - various strands of accessibility related work, including a planned review of the CAA's Airport Accessibility Performance Framework and continuing to input to the Aviation Accessibility Implementation Group (AAIG) and the Accessible Travel Charter.
- The government's growth agenda, including supporting the CAA's ongoing economic regulation work, which includes Heathrow expansion¹¹ as well as any new government priorities.
- We will continue to work with the CAA's Sustainability Team to ensure a strong consumer focus is considered in relevant policies and with the Environmental

¹¹ The government has recently published its draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement (HENPS). See [link](#).

Sustainability Panel, who has recently appointed a new Chair, to explore common themes and interactions between consumer and environmental policy objectives.

- Other ongoing work, including helping shape wave 15 of the Aviation Consumer Survey and other planned research.

Influencing future frameworks

We recognise there are many significant changes and challenges taking place across the aviation sector at this time. Within this context, we will seek to improve consumer outcomes by ensuring the right future frameworks are in place. We intend to:

- Input to the CAA's broader strategic thinking on consumer matters including future updates to its annual strategic objectives and other relevant strategies.
- Input to the future frameworks noted above including the new Aviation Bill, and those that relate to economic regulation, consumer protection, accessibility, sustainability and innovation - including those that relate to Artificial Intelligence and the Future Flight Programme. 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.
- Continue to have a strong focus on supporting the CAA's implementation of the Panel's recommendations on how to further embed the consumer interest across the organisation, as set out in our annual report for the year ended 31 March 2026. This includes embedding a strong consumer focus in relevant workstreams, including those that relate to the new Aviation Bill as well as cross-CAA work on policy development and economic advice and appraisals. As part of this, we will also continue to have a strong focus on consumer vulnerability and the CAA's approach to its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 and Equality Impact Assessments.

Chapter 4

Who we are

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.

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.

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.