

Aviation resilience planning

Over the half-term Jubilee weekend, we saw disruption at UK airports with some passengers facing long queues and cancellations largely due to staff shortages at airports, airlines and ground handlers. These experiences, for too many consumers recently, have been unacceptable.

The Secretary of State for Transport and I have made it clear to the sector that they need to operate services that are offered for sale properly and according to schedule, or provide swift, appropriate compensation.

The aviation industry is privately owned, operated and run. It is, therefore, responsible for making sure that it has enough staff to meet demand and to operate the flights offered for sale. It is important that the sector is a competitive, attractive market for workers. The government has called upon the sector's leadership to offer better packages and build a resilient workforce to meet demand.

Since earlier this year, government has worked across a number of different areas to help the industry alleviate the issues they have been facing. We are clear that consumers should not lose out.

The government is taking steps to boost consumer rights, including recently [consulting on using our Brexit freedoms to enhance consumer protections](#). We have committed to publishing an aviation passenger charter to ensure consumers can access information about their rights all in one place.

We have sought ways to ease the burden of background checks carried out by industry. A statutory instrument was laid on 29 April 2022 to provide greater flexibility, enabling ministers to take the decision to allow certain training to be undertaken while background checks were completed.

Ministers have also agreed that HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) employment history letters can be used as a suitable form of reference check with safeguards in place. These temporary alleviations have helped to speed up recruitment times.

In partnership with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the government has written to the industry setting out 5 specific expectations we have for the aviation sector this summer:

1. Summer schedules must be reviewed to make sure they are deliverable.
2. Everyone from ground handlers to air traffic control must collaborate on resilience planning.
3. Passengers must be promptly informed of their consumer rights when things go wrong and – if necessary – compensated in good time.
4. Disabled and less mobile passengers must be given assistance they require.
5. Safety and security must never be compromised.

I am chairing a Strategic Risk Group with chief executive officers of the

aviation sector, which will meet on a weekly basis going into the summer.

This group will identify possible interventions to further improve the resilience of the sector and will be used to hold the sector to account for delivering its schedules.

Department for Transport ministers and senior officials will continue to monitor the situation closely to make sure consumers do not lose out from any further disruption.