

DfT appoints Nick Denton to new independent aviation panel

- new independent aviation panel launched to drive forward best practice of regulatory processes at the Civil Aviation Authority
- Nick Denton, current Traffic Commissioner for the West Midlands, chosen by ministers to be appointed to the panel
- the panel will be fully operational from 2 May 2022

The Department for Transport (DfT) has today (11 April 2022) announced the first appointment to a new independent aviation panel created to strengthen transparency around decision-making and regulatory processes at the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Nick Denton, current [Traffic Commissioner for West Midlands](#), has been selected by ministers following a diligent recruitment process run by DfT.

He brings expertise in investigative processes and procedures following many years working as a Traffic Commissioner and, before that, in the civil service.

The panel is fully independent and impartial of the CAA and is available to review eligible decisions made by the CAA, which is responsible for the regulation of aviation safety, use of airspace and the licensing and financial fitness of airlines, among other things.

The panel will be open to review eligible decisions taken after 2 May 2022.

It will soon be open to individuals whose cases meet a certain threshold if they remain unsatisfied following the CAA's new internal review process.

Eligible decisions cover personnel licensing and certification decisions, such as those following an airspace infringement or the decision to suspend a licence or endorsement to an instructor or examiner.

The panel will consider whether the CAA correctly followed its processes and procedures in arriving at a decision. It will have the power to remit the case back to the CAA where it investigates and considers the CAA has not done this.

Aviation Minister Robert Courts said:

The UK aviation sector is world-leading, in part because of our high standards in training and regulation. We want everyone to feel fairly treated, which is why it is so important to have this panel.

Under Nick's leadership as the independent reviewer, we will continue to have a thriving independent aviation sector.

Sir Stephen Hillier, Chair of the UK CAA, said:

The CAA warmly welcomes Nick Denton to his new role as the independent reviewer of how the CAA has made decisions that affect individuals.

As the UK's independent aviation safety regulator, we always strive to make decisions properly and with safety interests to the fore. This additional layer of review will add more transparency to our processes for making those decisions, help ensure that we continually improve the quality of our service and build further trust between the CAA and those that we license.

Nick Denton, Traffic Commissioner, said:

I'm very pleased to be appointed to the panel and to offer my expertise in reviewing cases with a fair, proportionate and independent eye, as I have done up to now in my Traffic Commissioner role.

Decision-making processes must be understandable and transparent to those whom they affect and people need to be confident that they have received fair treatment. I will do my utmost to ensure that the panel achieves these outcomes.

An important aspect of the UK and international aviation safety system is that the regulatory authority has the responsibility for safety-related decisions. Therefore, the CAA will remain the ultimate decision-maker.

In the exceptional event that the CAA chooses not to reconsider a case in light of a recommendation to do so from the panel, it will need to explain its rationale to the complainant, the panel and the Minister for Aviation.

More information about the panel, including its terms of reference, will be made available on GOV.UK and the CAA website in May.