

CMA launches court action against Teletext Holidays

On 26 May 2021, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) announced that Truly Holdings Ltd, the company that operates Teletext Holidays, and its sister company, the travel operator Alpharooms.com, had signed undertakings committing to refund package holiday customers for holidays cancelled during the pandemic.

After reviewing Truly Holdings's final report on progress with repayments, the CMA wrote to Truly Holdings on 16 September stating it would take the company to court unless it took urgent action to improve how it handles refunds to package holiday customers.

The CMA does not consider that Truly Holdings has done enough to provide refunds to package holiday customers with outstanding claims, including recent cancellations, or to make sure that it pays all future refunds that are due within the 14 days required by law.

The CMA has therefore filed proceedings requesting a court order that outstanding refunds be immediately repaid and that, going forward, customers who are entitled to a refund are repaid within 14 days. The CMA will also be asking the court to order that Truly Holdings puts in place appropriate processes to ensure it complies with the law in the future.

As the CMA considers that Truly Holdings is in breach of the law and that harm to consumers is ongoing, it is seeking that the claim be expedited, so that the case can be heard more quickly. However, it is for the court to determine a date for the hearing.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

Companies must abide by consumer protection law and treat their customers fairly.

After engaging with Teletext Holidays extensively, we are now requesting a court order to make sure that the company immediately pays back the money it still owes to customers and refunds people within 14 days, going forward.

As a result of the CMA's action to date, Truly Holdings has so far paid over £7 million owed to package holiday customers.

1. Teletext Holidays is the trading name of Truly Travel Limited, which is a subsidiary of Truly Holdings Limited. Truly Travel Limited and Alpha Holidays Limited (which trades as Alpharooms.com) are both subsidiaries of Truly Holdings Limited.

2. Truly Holdings Limited agreed to a schedule of repayments, where it would use all reasonable endeavours to ensure customers owed cash refunds for package holiday bookings cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic on or before 31 July 2020 would be refunded by 30 June 2021; customers with bookings cancelled between 1 August 2020 and 31 October 2020 would be refunded by 31 July 2021; and customers with bookings cancelled between 1 November 2020 and 24 May 2021 (inclusive) would be refunded by 31 August 2021.
3. An undertaking is a voluntary agreement a firm makes to address an enforcement authority's concerns and resolve an investigation.
4. The CMA's investigation relates to package travel holidays booked with Teletext Holidays and Alpharooms.com, not flights or accommodation booked on a standalone basis.
5. Where package holidays are cancelled and consumers are entitled to a full refund under the Package Travel Regulations, those refunds must be provided within 14 days of the cancellation.
6. Media queries should be directed to: press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.

[Summary of updates to international travel, October 2021](#)

As trailed in my [Oral Statement on 20 September](#), as of the 4 October, we have:

- replaced the traffic light system with a single red list and simplified travel measures for eligible arrivals from the rest of the world based on passengers' vaccination status
- removed the requirement for eligible fully vaccinated passengers to take a pre-departure test, providing that they are arriving into England from a non-red list country or territory and have not been to a red list country or territory in the last 10 days – the Devolved Administrations have also aligned on this policy

We have also made the following changes in respect of international travel:

Lateral flow devices for arrival tests

From 4am on 24 October, arrivals into England who are considered fully vaccinated, along with most under 18s, who have not been in a red list country in the last 10 days will be able to [take a lateral flow test on or before day 2 of their arrival, instead of a PCR test](#). This change will cut the costs of tests in time for travellers returning from half-term breaks and these tests can be booked from 22 October.

Passengers will need to take a photo of their lateral flow test result and send it back to their private testing provider for verification. Anyone who tests positive will need to self-isolate and take a free NHS confirmatory PCR test.

Red list review

The government has conducted the [first review of the red list](#) under our new and simplified system of international travel. As of 4am on Monday 11 October, 47 countries including South Africa, Brazil, Mexico and Thailand were removed from the [red list](#).

Given the success of the vaccination programme in the UK and the latest evidence of variants across the world, including the fact that the Delta variant is now dominant in many countries as it is in the UK, we have been able to significantly reduce the red list. However, we remain concerned about the presence of Mu and Lambda variants in the small number of countries we have kept on the red list. We will keep this list under review.

The following 7 countries and territories now make up the red list:

- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Haiti
- Panama
- Peru
- Venezuela

All passengers arriving into England from a red list country, or those who have been in a red list country or territory in the last 10 days, will have to quarantine at a managed quarantine service facility for 10 days upon their arrival in England.

Expansion of the inbound vaccination policy

As of 4am on Monday 11 October, we also expanded our [inbound vaccination policy](#) to include eligible fully vaccinated passengers who have not been in a red list country in the 10 days before their arrival into England, to the below countries:

- Albania

- Bahamas
- Bangladesh
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Colombia
- Egypt
- Ghana
- Grenada
- Hong Kong
- India
- Jamaica
- Jordan
- Kenya
- Kosovo
- Maldives
- Moldova
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- North Macedonia
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Serbia
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- Vietnam

In addition, we have expanded the policy to a further set of countries and territories which were removed from the red list at this review:

- Brazil
- Chile
- Georgia
- Indonesia
- Montenegro
- Namibia
- The Philippines
- South Africa
- Thailand

Our inbound vaccination policy now covers over 100 countries and territories, and eligible fully vaccinated passengers will be treated the same as those vaccinated in the UK. Eligible fully vaccinated passengers who have not been in a red list country in the 10 days before their arrival into England will no longer need to take a pre-departure test before their departure, a post-arrival test on day 8 or self-isolate upon their arrival. This now includes UN staff and volunteers vaccinated as part of the United Nations vaccine rollout.

Clinical trial participants

From the end of October, we will also recognise as fully vaccinated people participating in COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials from countries and territories including Japan, Canada, Australia and the EU, provided they can supply adequate proof of their participation. This is in recognition of their vital work in helping to tackle the virus and builds on the agreements made at the meetings with G7 counterparts that I chaired in May and September this year.

Acceptance of UK pre-departure test certification via the EU Digital COVID Certificate

As of 4am on Monday 11 October, non-vaccinated passengers arriving into England are allowed to present proof of a negative pre-departure test via the EU Digital COVID Certificate (DCC), in either paper or digital formats.

Changes to FCDO travel advice

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has lifted its advice against all but essential travel for over 80 countries and territories. The change means people will be able to travel to a larger number of destinations with greater ease.

The FCDO will no longer advise against travel to non-red list countries on COVID-19 grounds, except in exceptional circumstances such as if the local healthcare system is overwhelmed. Many travel insurance companies use FCDO travel advice as a reference point in their policies – typically excluding cover for places where government advises against essential travel, however people will now be able to purchase travel insurance for a wider range of destinations across the globe.

The FCDO will continue to advise against all but essential travel for all red list countries and territories, where the risk to British travellers is ‘unacceptably high’.

Whilst public health is a devolved matter, the government works closely with the devolved administrations on any changes to international travel and aims to ensure a whole UK approach.

[‘Take action on fraud’, regulator warns charities, as new figures show](#)

over £8 million reported lost to crime last year

This latest data from Action Fraud also shows 1,059 separate incidents of fraud were reported by charities in just one year from April 2020 to March 2021. The true scale of fraud against charities is believed to be much higher, as fraud is known to be underreported.

The Commission is highlighting these figures, and the live risk to charities from fraud, as part of [Charity Fraud Awareness Week](#), an annual campaign kicking off today that aims to highlight ways charities can protect themselves from this crime.

This warning comes as other new figures, released today, show that around 65% of charities feel the pandemic has increased their risk of fraud. Charities expressed concerns that risk may have been increased as a result of more remote working and virtual sign-off processes.

Together with the Fraud Advisory Panel, the regulator is today urging all trustees to sign up to a new [Stop Fraud Pledge](#), which commits charities to taking six practical actions to reduce the chances of falling victim to fraud.

The pledge includes measures such as appointing a suitable person to champion counter-fraud work throughout the organisation, performing stringent checks and due diligence, and assessing each year how well fraud controls are working, what new risks there may be and what improvements are needed.

Helen Stephenson CBE, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission, said:

Charity is special – it delivers good to so many people’s lives and helps strengthen our society. When the public donate generously to charities it is because they want to make a real and positive difference to a cause they often care deeply about, and they want to know their money will reach the ‘front line’.

Sadly, as these figures we have released today show, there remain criminal individuals who would take advantage of organisations that seek to do good and of those that generously donate.

That is why I am calling on all charities to take the risk of fraud seriously by signing up to our new Stop Fraud Pledge and taking six simple steps to protect their charity. Combating fraud gives the public confidence that their money is safe, protects vital funds for charities and more widely helps maintain trust in the charities we all care so passionately about.

David Clarke, Chair of the Fraud Advisory Panel, said:

With fraud and cybercrime at record levels it has never been more important for charities to be aware of the risks and how they might be affected. As we emerge from the pandemic, charities need to recover and flourish without fear of fraud. Taking relatively simple measures can go a long way to protecting your charity and keeping it safe from harm.

It is concerning that a small minority of charities still do not financially invest in fraud prevention activities. This shows that there is still more to be done. We encourage charities to sign up to the pledge to help protect themselves and minimise the risks.

Charities that are concerned they have been the victim of fraud or cybercrime, should report to [Action Fraud](#) and as a serious incident to the [Charity Commission](#).

Individuals can also report phishing messages to the National Cyber Security Centre through the [Suspicious Email Reporting Service \(SERS\)](#).

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. [Charity Fraud Awareness Week](#) runs from 18 to 22 October 2021. The week aims to raise awareness of fraud and cybercrime affecting the sector and to create a safe space for charities and their supporters to talk about fraud and share good practice. #StopCharityFraud.

2. Figures on reports of fraud and total fraud losses to charity are based on reports made to Action Fraud between April 2020-March 2021.

3. A small-scale survey of charities (70 responded) conducted by BDO LLP in partnership with the Fraud Advisory Panel in September 2021 revealed the following: 65% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the pandemic has increased the risk of fraud to their charity. 53% of respondents believed that the pandemic has made it more difficult to manage the risk of fraud within their charity. 60% of charities said that their financial investment in fraud prevention has stayed the same during the pandemic. A further 14% said they do not financially invest in fraud prevention at all. 90% of respondents said that the risk of fraud to their charity over the next 12 months is expected to remain at the same level or increase.

4. Charities can find free tools and advice on the new website preventcharityfraud.org.uk

5. The National Cyber Security Centre and the Charity Commission have worked together to produce resources relevant to charities of all sizes. The [Cyber Security: Small Charity Guide](#) provides simple, free/ low-cost steps to improve cyber security. [The Board Toolkit](#) is most relevant for larger

charities and helps boards and senior managers understand cyber security from a governance perspective.

6.The Charity Commission is the registrar and regulator of charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust, so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

7.The Fraud Advisory Panel is the voice of the counter-fraud profession, committed to tackling fraud and financial crime. We aim to strengthen fraud resilience by championing best practice in fraud prevention, detection, reporting, investigation, and prosecution. We do this through education, advice and [researchfraudadvisorypanel.org](https://www.researchfraudadvisorypanel.org).

[Sellafield site emergency exercise – Tuesday 19 October 2021](#)

News story

An emergency site exercise will be taking place at the Sellafield site tomorrow.



The Sellafield site emergency exercise may involve the sounding of the site siren and the use of low-level pyrotechnics and blank firearms. The sound from these exercise activities may be heard off-site.

Local residents who are registered to receive automated SMS text, email and telephone warnings from Sellafield, may be contacted.

If you are a local resident and haven't yet signed up to receive automated alerts, but would like to, follow the instructions below.

[Alertcascade](#)

Emergency exercises are held regularly at all nuclear licensed sites to test their readiness in the event of an emergency.

[The Train Driving Licences and Certificates \(Amendment\) Regulations 2022: draft legislation](#)

As part of the government's EU transition programme, the Department for Transport (DfT), working with other government departments, has been negotiating bilateral arrangements with France to support the continuation of cross-border rail services, which provide significant economic and social benefit to the United Kingdom.

The purpose of these draft regulations, which are being published today (18 October 2021), is to provide for the continued recognition of EEA issued train driving licences ('European TDLs') in the UK section of Channel Tunnel cross-border area, so that a bilateral agreement (currently agreed in principle at a technical level) for the mutual recognition of British and European TDLs will be able to be ratified once in place.

Without making these regulations, and the proposed agreement they will implement, European TDLs would cease to be valid in the Channel Tunnel border area from 31 January 2022.

These regulations will provide for the continued recognition of European TDLs only in the UK section of the Channel Tunnel Fixed Link up to Ashford International Station and Dollands Moor freight terminal in Kent. This will be reciprocated in France with respect to British train driving licences up to Fréthun freight and passenger terminals in Calais.

The draft regulations make the necessary amendments to domestic train driving licensing legislation to support the implementation of the proposed bilateral agreement. This will be achieved by amending the Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations 2010.

The agreement, and by extension these regulations, are fully compatible with our fundamental red lines in these negotiations, which are to support the continuation of cross-border services, which provide economic and social benefit to the UK while conferring no role for the EU courts or the European Union Agency for Railways in UK territory and avoiding dynamic alignment with EU law.

The bilateral agreement has now been agreed in principle at a technical level and is expected to be ready for signature soon. Subject to approval by Parliament, the intention is that the regulations will be made and come into force after the bilateral agreement has been signed.

In the unlikely event that France is not subsequently able to ratify the bilateral agreement, we will look to revoke the changes and recognition of European TDLs put in place by these regulations.

The regulations are being published in draft 28 days before they are due to be laid for affirmative debate. This is required under paragraph 14 of Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, because the Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations 2010 were made using powers under the European Communities Act 1972.

See the [Draft regulations and accompanying explanatory memorandum](#).