



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: SO28490

22 April 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you to raise concerns regarding the Reforming Aviation Consumer Policy consultation, and particularly regarding the proposed changes to EU261 regulations.

Currently, under EU261 rules, someone on a domestic flight in the UK can claim £220 once their flight has been delayed by up to three hours. However, should this policy be changed as is being considered in the consultation, passengers would only be compensated based on their ticket price and length of delay.

Concerningly, this could remove significant financial incentives to ensure airlines keep their timetables running without delay, or cancellation. For instance, if the proposed change was implemented, consumer compensation could plummet to just over a quarter of the current rate.

To put this in direct terms, research conducted by Which? found that if an average full flight from Gatwick to Belfast was cancelled or had a long delay, the airline is currently legally obliged to pay £39,600 in compensation. Under the proposed changes, this would drop to just £9,900.

I am therefore extremely concerned that this alteration to EU261 could leave consumers delayed, or at worst stranded, without adequate financial compensation. This change could also further hurt consumers by allowing airlines to subject them to the return of unfair practises such as overbooking and denied boarding.

The British exit from the European Union should not be used as a gateway to scrap consumer protection regulation, and I therefore urge the Government to reject these potential changes. Further, I encourage the Government to increase enforcement in the area, and give further, not fewer, protections to consumers in the aviation industry.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Olney".

Sarah Olney
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park