

News story: New aviation passenger charter to improve flying experience

- New charter for airlines and airports designed to enhance customer experience.
- Measures to support passengers with disabilities and other needs.
- Collaborative approach between government, industry and regulator to further drive up service standards.

Today (7 December 2018) during a visit to Gatwick airport, the Aviation Minister Liz Sugg will outline the first proposed measures from the government's upcoming aviation strategy consultation.

Building on the positive steps already taken by industry, the consultation proposes the creation of a new 'passenger charter' to be adopted by airlines and airports, and backed by the government.

Through a partnership between industry and government, the charter will promote best practice and create a shared agreement of the required service levels for passengers, ensuring improvements are felt throughout their journey.

A major focus of the charter centres on improving the flying experience for passengers with disabilities, providing clarity on the assistance that should be provided to people travelling with reduced mobility and hidden disabilities.

The government has worked with industry, including disability advisory groups, to put forward a number of proposed measures including:

- strengthening accessibility standards for airports and introduce new standards for airlines
- ensuring better training for airport and airline employees
- raising awareness among disabled passengers of their rights to assistance and how to obtain it
- improving storage standards for wheelchairs and waiving limits for compensation payments
- working with industry to achieve the long term goal of passengers being able to fly in their own air-worthy wheelchairs

Performance against the charter will be monitored and regularly reviewed publicly by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which has already made significant progress in this area, including a new system of measuring the performance offered by airlines, as well as airports.

And action will be taken if improvements aren't made voluntarily, bolstered by an extension of legal standards and enforcement powers for the CAA, including fines for breaches of accessibility and compensation measures.

The charter will also set out service level standards for all passengers for timely and simplified resolution of complaints and claims for compensation when flights are disrupted to improve the service offered to passengers.

It will incorporate work already undertaken by the CAA in reviewing the transparency and fairness of airline terms and conditions, including allocated seating and other unclear charges.

Aviation Minister Liz Sugg said:

Our fantastic aviation industry connects passengers to destinations across the world with some of the best fares available.

But we are determined to work with industry to continue to drive up service levels and the new passenger charter aims to improve the experience of all passengers when they fly.

Visiting Gatwick airport to see its accessibility facilities, Aviation Minister Liz Sugg was joined by Accessibility Minister Nus Ghani to discuss how the Charter could benefit passengers with disabilities.

Accessibility Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

We need to address the fact that 57% of disabled passengers say they find flying and using airports difficult.

That's why our proposed passenger charter includes measures designed to make real changes that will improve the accessibility of flying, building on the ambitions set out in our [Inclusive Transport Strategy](#) earlier this year.

We are committed to continuing the progress the industry has already made in making the aviation network truly open to all.

Gatwick airport has introduced new facilities for passengers with disabilities, including security lanes and a specially built lounge specifically designed for passengers who require assistance.

The passenger charter will be proposed as part of the government's aviation strategy consultation later this year, which will be consulted on for 16 weeks before the finalisation of the government's policy in 2019.