

Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) network action on airlines' COVID-19 related cancellation practices

Implementation table submitted by British Airways

Date: 29/03/2022

[NB: The Commission and CPC authorities may decide to publish this implementation table]

In the context of the CPC network's coordinated investigation into airlines' COVID-19 related cancellation practices, 16 major airlines operating on the EU market have made wide-ranging commitments to clear their reimbursement backlogs, offer cash reimbursement for unused vouchers that had been pushed on consumers in the early stages of the pandemic and better inform consumers about their cancellation-related passenger rights.¹

This implementation table outlines the commitments made by British Airways, the measures taken by British Airways to implement its commitments, the state of play of implementation as well as any issues encountered by British Airways that still need to be resolved in order to achieve full implementation.

Commitment	Measures taken by the airline	State of play of implementation / currently remaining issues
<p>1. Clear remaining reimbursement backlog by 1 September 2021</p> <p><i>Which measures did the airline take to clear the backlog of pending reimbursement requests by 1</i></p>	<p>British Airways had no back log at time of reporting to the CPC.</p>	

¹ [Airlines: reimbursement after flight cancellations \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip19_1911)

<p><i>September 2021? And what was achieved concretely?</i></p> <p><i>In case of remaining problems: Which measures did the airline take to address those problems and clear the remaining backlog of pending reimbursement requests? What is the expected timeline for full implementation?</i></p>		
<p>2. Refund passengers within 7 days as required under EU law (at the latest from 1 September 2021 onwards, since there should be no more reimbursement backlog from that date on [see point 1 above])</p> <p><i>Which measure has the airline put in place to allow all passengers to be refunded within 7 days as required under EU law? When was this achieved concretely?</i></p> <p><i>What is the current average time of reimbursement (in case it is above 7 days)? In case of remaining problems: Which measures has the airline put in place to tackle those problems and achieve the target of refunding passengers within 7 days</i></p>	<p>British Airways was compliant at the time of dialogue with the CPC.</p> <p>Current average time for reimbursement is less than 7 days.</p>	

<p><i>and what is the expected timeline for achieving that target?</i></p>		
<p>3. Provide clear information to consumers about their passenger rights in the event of a flight cancellation by the airline</p> <p><i>How does the airline ensure such clear information in its communication to consumers about their cancellation-related passenger rights? (You may wish to detail by channel of communication, e.g. website, emails sent to passengers notifying them about a cancellation, flyers given at the airport, call centre routines, chatbot, ..)</i></p>	<p>British Airways provides customers with clear information through the following consumer channels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cancellation emails: British Airways provides customers with clear and comprehensive information on their customer rights and options via customer cancellation notification emails. 2. It's website, ba.com: British Airways has a dedicated webpage on ba.com which provides detailed information about their consumer rights in the event that the airline cancels a flight. The comprehensive rights page is also accessible through cancellation emails and the airline's COVID travel information pages. 3. Notification of rights leaflets: British Airways provides customer with notification of their consumer rights via leaflets at airports. 4. Call centres: Customers calling the airline's call centres will be advised of their rights in the event of a cancellation, given re-route options or offered refunds. 	

	<p>5. Social Media: The airline uses its social media channels to provide information to affected customers of their consumer rights and directs them to the dedicated help area of ba.com</p> <p>6. Media: In the event of major disruption the airline's press team provides information to the media in relation to consumer rights.</p>	
<p>4. Present the different options the passenger has in the event of a flight cancellation by the airline (rerouting, refund in money and – if offered by the airline – refund in a voucher), with equal prominence on the websites, e-mails and other communication to passengers</p> <p><i>How does the airline ensure that options that a passenger has when their flight is cancelled are presented with equal prominence?</i></p>	<p>As above.</p>	
<p>5. Clearly distinguish in the in the communication to passengers flight cancellations by the airline</p>	<p>Cancellation emails: British Airways provides customers with clear and comprehensive information on their consumer rights and the options</p>	

<p>(and the passenger's ensuing statutory rights) from flight cancellations by the passenger (and possible contractual rights that the passenger may have in those cases under the airline's terms and conditions of carriage)</p> <p><i>How does the airline ensure that in its communication to passengers there is a clear distinction between flight cancellations by the airline (and the passenger's resulting statutory rights) from cancellations by the passenger (and possible contractual rights that the passenger may have in those cases under the airline's terms and conditions of carriage)?</i></p>	<p>available to them via customer cancellation emails. This includes the customer's entitlement to receive a cash refund or to re-book their flight.</p> <p>Website: British Airways has a dedicated webpage on ba.com which provides detailed information with regard to customers' consumer rights in the event of cancellation. The comprehensive rights page is also accessible through cancellation emails and through the COVID travel information pages. In addition to the dedicated comprehensive customer rights page, consumer rights information and customer options in the event of cancellation can also be viewed in the COVID travel information pages.</p> <p>Since the beginning of the pandemic, British Airways has maintained and regularly updated a dedicated travel information page, which sets out detailed information regarding various topics, including a comprehensive description of options available to customers if they cannot travel, or choose not to travel on their British Airways' operated flight.</p> <p>Customers choosing not to fly and contacting the airline's call centres, will</p>	
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	<p>be guided through their options by customer service colleagues.</p>	
<p>6. Offering reimbursement in money to passengers holding unused vouchers that had been pushed on them (i.e. issued without the passenger having an effective choice to opt for reimbursement in money instead).</p> <p><u>NB:</u> The CPC Network considers that vouchers that were issued by British Airways between 9/03/2020 and 19/11/2020 had been pushed on passengers. British Airways' commitment to offering reimbursement in money therefore concerns all unused vouchers that were issued by British Airways between 9/03/2020 and 19/11/2020.</p> <p><i>How did the airline inform the holders of unused vouchers issued during the specified period?</i></p>	<p>Our customers are always and have always been entitled to a refund if their flight is cancelled and we've always done our best to ensure customers are aware of their options and to process these requests as quickly as possible.</p> <p>We have commenced emailing customers who, following receipt of notification of cancellation of their flight in the period of 9 March 2020 – 19 November 2020, requested a voucher, to advise them that they can request a refund of the value (or residual value) of the voucher if not used (or only part used) within 24-months of the date of issue.</p> <p>The email contains a link to an online form. The customer uses this form to request a refund. Once completed, the customer receives a confirmation email and if eligible, the refund will then be automatically processed.</p> <p>All elements of the process put in place to facilitate this refunding have been designed and built by British Airways</p>	<p>Customer email communications commenced on 21 March 2022.</p> <p>Customers will be contacted in chronological order as their vouchers reach the 24-month period and advised that they can now request a refund.</p> <p>The process is running smoothly.</p>

<p><i>Has this information campaign been completed and which results had been achieved by the end of 2021?</i></p> <p><i>In case the airline encountered any problems: Which measures has the airline put in place to tackle those problems?</i></p>	<p>specifically for this purpose, including the hiring and training of more people to action customers' refund requests.</p>	
<p>7. Inform passengers about the possibility of requesting a refund directly from the airline and any conditions for requesting a direct refund on their websites, for passengers who booked their flights through an intermediary and are experiencing difficulties</p> <p><i>How does the airline assist passengers having difficulties obtaining a refund from the intermediary they bought their ticket from? How this is reflected in the relevant communication to passengers? (Please break down by channel of communication, e.g. website, routines for call centre, instructions in self-management tools, chatbot, ...)</i></p>	<p>On its website British Airways invites passengers that require assistance with obtaining a refund from intermediaries to contact BA.</p> <p>Where travel agents have consistently failed to pass on refunds, a relevant British Airways' account manager is in contact with the organisation directly to prompt refunding. The airline has and continues to terminate relationships with intermediaries that fail to abide by its agency terms and conditions (which include the requirement to comply with refunding requirements).</p> <p>Where a travel agent has become insolvent, the airline has been able to assist customers.</p>	