

Govt to boost UK airline passenger rights

- A Monitor Desk Report

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The government has unveiled proposals designed to make it easier for airline customers to seek justice from unfair practices in the industry.

Outlined by transport secretary, Grant Shapps, measures include considering the creation of a fairer compensation model for when domestic UK flights are delayed.

Based on the current compensation model used by rail and ferry customers, this will see a significant shift away from the current 'set rate' model, the government said.

Passengers would instead be able to claim compensation based on the length of the flight delay and linked to cost of travel rather than having to meet a certain threshold - which is currently a three-hour delay.

The government is also considering mandating all airlines to be part of the aviation Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) scheme, which would give consumers a route for escalating certain complaints that cannot be settled between the consumer and airline without needing to go to court.

In the current setup, there are two ADR providers in the UK and airlines can join voluntarily.

Under the new proposals, all airlines would have to join the scheme, giving customers access to this dispute route regardless of who they fly with.

This could help people who are struggling to get refunds when they are entitled to them.

The proposals also aim to strengthen the UK regulator's powers to further protect both consumers' and airlines' interests.

As the UK's aviation regulator, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) works to ensure consumers are protected and treated fairly.

Under the new proposals, they would have increased powers to enforce consumer protection law, for example, and would be able to fine airlines directly for breaches where appropriate.

Shapps said: "People deserve a service that puts passengers first when things go wrong, so today I've launched proposals that aim to bolster airline consumer protections and rights.

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