

Response of BAR UK TO CAA Consumer Panel Consultation

BAR UK received notice of this consultation less than three weeks before the closing date.

Consequently, with quite a few other government consultations also requiring attention, the time available to provide more detailed responses has been curtailed.

Summary response

BAR UK supports Option 1 – No Panel.

The need for a consumer panel remains unclear, as is any value it is supposed to add.

The Air Transport Users Council was dismantled at short notice, so why a Consumer Panel is now proposed in its place requires clarity.

Broader responses

1. Whilst costs cannot be ignored, the proposal to go for Option 1 is based solely on the fact that the business proposition is unclear, and is hard to define where the value lies in a Consumer Panel.
2. If CAA, as Regulator, really requires a 'critical friend', then such a body should consist of a cross-section of stakeholders, not one that has an leaning automatically perceived to be pro-consumer.
3. Such a cross-section of stakeholders could quite possibly be established, at no cost, to meet 3-4 times per annum.
4. Its remit would need to be totally clear, and based on Regulatory policy, rather than regulatory policy being based on it.
5. Unlike the other regulated industries alluded to, the air transport industry is both international and well-regulated in respect of consumers' interests.
6. With reference to point 5 above, what exactly is it that the consumer panel is expected to add?

Concluding remarks

The above points are meant to answer the questions set out in the consultation document.

BAR UK will be pleased to meet and discuss them should it be so wished.

END