



national consumer agency
gníomhaireacht náisiúnta tomhaltóirí

putting **consumers** first

Commission for Aviation Regulation Consultation on the Regulatory Approach taken towards Quality of Service at Dublin Airport

The National Consumer Agency (the Agency) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Commission for Aviation Regulation's (the Commission) consultation paper on the Regulatory Approach taken towards Quality of Service at Dublin Airport. The Agency is available to meet the Commission to discuss these comments in greater detail if required. The Agency notes that the Commission is looking for preliminary views at this stage and will consult further on specific proposals later in 2008.

Responses to the specific questions raised by the consultation are detailed below but, in principal, the Agency believes that quality of service should be monitored and included as part of the price cap on the revenue from airport charges that the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) can earn per passenger. The Agency believes that quality of service should be fully reflected in the price consumer's pay for using Dublin Airport.

Furthermore, the Agency is of the opinion that regular quality of service performance reports should be published. For example, the DAA could be directed by the Commission to publish, monthly or quarterly, its performance against a specified service standard. DAA could also be required to include this information on prominent signs throughout the airport. These complementary measures would offer a clear incentive to maintain a high standard, and to improve, customer service over time.

The Agency recognises that only airport facilities and services, which the DAA has direct control over can be included in performance reports or as part of the quality of service segment of the price cap.

The Agency notes that price caps are not set by the Commission for the airports at Cork and Shannon but a scheme to promote quality of service should also be introduced for these airports.

The NCA responds to the specific questions raised in the consultation as follows:

How should quality of service at Dublin Airport be defined?

How do you think quality of service might be measured?

The Agency notes that the DAA already assesses a number of service quality measures at Dublin Airport through surveys of its customer's experiences.

The Agency believes that a similar approach should be used to monitor quality of service for inclusion in the price cap. Appropriate baselines would need to be determined, either the results of existing surveys or new research, and appropriate improvements agreed between the Commission and the DAA.

The Agency believes that quality of service, at a minimum, should be measured by assessing customer satisfaction with the following:

- ◆ Wayfinding /Signposting within Terminal
- ◆ Flight Information
- ◆ Levels of Congestion
- ◆ Overall Airport Cleanliness
- ◆ Toilet Cleanliness
- ◆ Seating Availability
- ◆ Trolley Availability
- ◆ Customer Service Staff Availability
- ◆ Security Waiting Times
- ◆ DAA Car Parks
- ◆ Baggage Reclaim
- ◆ Overall Airport Rating

The Agency notes that the last two measures are partly dependent on the Airlines. These could only be included if factors beyond the control of DAA are excluded from the any metric used to measure customer satisfaction. The Agency suggests that the second part of this process should examine the feasibility of using these variables.

How should quality of service be treated for the purposes of setting future price caps at Dublin Airport?

The Agency believes that quality of service should be included as part of the price cap on the revenue from airport charges that the DAA can earn per passenger. Quality of service should be fully reflected in the price the consumer's pay for using Dublin Airport.

What financial incentives, if any, should be in place to influence the delivery of quality of service at Dublin Airport?

The proportion of the price cap that should be allocated to quality of service is a matter for the Commission to decide upon. It should however, be an amount sufficient to promote a significant improvement in quality of service over time. The Agency, at this stage, is not convinced of the benefit of having a bonus scheme if the DAA exceeds agreed standards. The initial quality of service standards should be designed to promote continuing improvements.

How should the Commission address differences of opinion about the appropriate trade-off between the level of airport charges and quality of service at the airport?

This is a matter for the Commission.

The **National Consumer Agency** (NCA) is a statutory body established by the Irish Government in May 2007.

Our aim is to provide strong and modern consumer protection, safeguarding consumers in Ireland and empowering them to understand and to exercise their rights.

To achieve our aim, we:

- ◆ Inform consumers of their rights through consumer information;
- ◆ Promote a strong consumer culture in Ireland through consumer education and awareness;
- ◆ Help business obey consumer law through our enforcement activities; and
- ◆ Represent consumer interests at all levels of local and national consumer policy development through targeted research and forceful advocacy.