

lastminute.com fulfils its commitment to refund package holiday customers impacted by COVID-19 pandemic

- *We have and will continue to work with the CMA to ensure customers come first - but this has to be a commitment across the whole travel industry - including airlines*
- *We welcome the CMA now tackling the issue with several Airlines failing to respect their legal obligation to refund customers within 7 days of flight cancellation*

London, February 26th 2021 - Since the outbreak of the pandemic lastminute.com has been working relentlessly to support customers in these unprecedented times, refunding more than £40m in the UK alone for package holidays. In addition a further £1m was refunded within the last week, while working positively alongside the CMA.

Andrea Bertoli, deputy CEO of lastminute.com group said: *"We sincerely apologise to the small proportion of customers who had to wait far too long for the refund of their Package Holidays refunds that were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. And we will do our utmost to regain their trust.*

The volume of cancellations and customer contacts caused by the pandemic was unprecedented and we had to face the added challenge of setting up our entire workforce to work remotely due to the nationwide lockdown across the world.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, all our teams have been relentlessly working to support our customers and to automate our processes where possible . We still have some improvements to do, but I can say that today we are in a much stronger position to manage refunds in a timely manner.

I want to thank the CMA for their collaboration in these very difficult times and I am pleased to see that they are now addressing the issue with several Airlines for not respecting their legal obligation to refund customers within 7 days of flight cancellation.

As stated recently by the European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Association and EU Travel Tech, this is damaging for consumer confidence and travel industry recovery. Airlines' refusal to timely refund their customers and travel companies when a flight is cancelled has to stop."

For any potentially pending package holidays refunds, lastminute.com has created a simple system for those customers who, for example have changed their email address or phone number and have been unable to receive a refund from us. A dedicated contact form will be made available for those customers on the lastminute.com homepage which will allow customers to easily contact us and finalise their refund promptly.

Note for the editors:

ECTAA and EU Travel Tech say "Airlines' refusal to refund travel companies and their customers has to stop" (PR 22/2/2021)

<https://www.ectaa.org/Uploads/press-releases/PUBS-PR-20210223-Airlines-push-cash-crunch-down-the-value-chain-ECTAA-EUTT.pdf>

CMA launches investigation into airlines over refunds (PR 16/12/2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-cma-launches-investigation-into-airlines-over-refunds>
