

JAMES E THOMPSON  
H M Assistant Coroner for  
County Durham and Darlington  
H.M. Coroners Office  
PO Box 282  
Bishop Auckland  
Co Durham  
DL14 4FY

Your Ref: [REDACTED]

By Email Only to: [REDACTED]

22 January 2021

Dear Mr Thompson,

**Re: Andrew Paul Westlake Deceased**

Further to your Report to Prevent Future Deaths made under Schedule 5, paragraph 7 Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and Regulation 28 Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, dated 3 December 2020 ("the PFD Report"), I am writing to provide you with **Jet2.com's** response as required by 27 January 2021.

Please find enclosed:

1. PDF document which explains our Ground Handling procedures and training review, conclusions and action plan.
2. Ground Operations Instruction document which update **Jet2.com's** Ground Handling Manual.
3. Email from the CAA to Jet2.com dated 15.01.21 confirming approval of **Jet2.com's** amended procedures.

In the PFD Report your concerns were centred on the following:

- Training for airline and ground staff (employed by UK Airlines) on vulnerability of lone passengers when disembarked overseas.
- Procedures for safeguarding vulnerable passengers such as Mr Westlake.

**Jet2.com** has a strong reputation for providing excellent customer service and a genuine desire to look after all customers. In addition, there is an established and robust training programme in place for colleagues across the Ground Operations environment. In the light of the case of Mr Westlake, we have taken the opportunity to review and update our existing policies, procedures, and training.

In addition, we have liaised with the CAA, for approval of the updates made. This is detailed below.

## **Ground Handling Manual**

As is the case with all airlines, **Jet2.com** maintain a Ground Handling Manual - a comprehensive document approved by the CAA - which is available to ground crew at all stations, and which details the procedures to facilitate an aircraft turnaround, including those relating to passengers.

Current [Jet2.com](https://www.jet2.com) policies contained within the manual refer to medical, physical, and mental health conditions in the context of supporting customers throughout their journey, whether pre-notified or otherwise. There is a strong focus on ensuring customers with medical conditions and hidden disabilities are supported appropriately and that their needs are met to the extent possible throughout their journey.

We have reviewed and updated the content to address the fact that a passenger who is disembarked from an aircraft for any reason may equally be suffering from a *hidden* disability, such as a mental health condition or crisis. In such circumstances the passenger may be vulnerable, and we have provided guidance on what additional assistance should be considered where such behaviour is evident or otherwise identified.

### **Section 4.2 of the Ground Handling Manual - Assistance Customers & Hidden Disabilities**

This section of the Ground Handling Manual applies to passengers who require assistance with air travel, for conditions including hidden disabilities. The section setting out common types of hidden disability has been updated to encompass an acute mental health issue, such as that suffered by Mr Westlake, as an example of a mental health condition and to note that an acute mental health crisis may require special additional assistance. The revised section is attached and, following positive feedback from the CAA, has already been published.

### **Section 3.3.19 of the Ground Handling Manual – Denied Boarding**

Section 3.3.19 of the Ground Handling Manual addresses the procedures to be followed by ground crew should a passenger be denied boarding. Denied boarding can take place for a number of reasons including disruptive behaviour, as was the case with Mr Westlake. The procedure now contains a provision that if a passenger is denied boarding, then ground crew should consider the immediate customer needs and assist the passenger to the extent practical in the circumstances. In situations where the passenger may have become distressed, or is potentially vulnerable or displaying vulnerable behaviour, then the procedure now provides that (to the extent practical in the circumstances) ground crew should consider whether it is possible to arrange additional support, such as assistance to the passenger in contacting family and friends (as occurred in the case of Mr Westlake), the appropriate Embassy or Consulate, or other services such as Police, medical services, or the airport chaplain. The revised procedure is attached and has also already been published.

## **Training**

To further support our colleagues, training will be updated in line with the revised procedures set out above, and we will additionally use the case of Mr Westlake as a case study in our initial and recurrent training to ground crew. We also plan to introduce a further suitable external course for trainers on Mental Health Awareness. We have set a deadline of 29 January 2021 to update the relevant training

material, and 21 March 2021 to deliver the updated training material, but this is of course subject to the recovery of the aviation industry and the return to flying operations in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic.

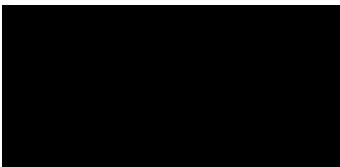
**CAA**

Finally, we have liaised with the CAA in respect of our procedures and the matter of Mr Westlake. The CAA's Consumers and Markets Group (consumer protection), and Safety and Airspace Regulation Group (aviation safety) have now reviewed our updated procedures. They have confirmed in the attached email dated 15.01.21, that the approach adopted by [Jet2.com](https://www.jet2.com) is what the CAA would expect from a responsible operator in terms of dealing with vulnerable passengers.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere condolences to Mr Westlake's family and friends, for their loss.

I trust that this response is to your satisfaction, but please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries.

Yours sincerely,



Group Legal Director & Company Secretary  
**Jet2.com & Jet2holidays**