



# Travel Innovation Group Bulletin Number 1

*From Michael Edwards, Managing Director*

———— 03 April 2020 ————

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

It's been a rough few weeks for us all.

At Lime, Aviate we have tried to keep everyone up to date with our situation, airline policies and industry news. As we are now 'more settled' we have started to move our attention and priorities to other matters.

To assist with our communications, I will now produce a twice weekly Bulletin (Tuesdays and Fridays). This Bulletin will focus on key matters incorporating both Lime and Aviate news and updates as well as dealing with issues as matters unfold during this crisis. Please share these with your relevant colleagues so that everyone is kept up to date. The Bulletin will also include our Service Level updates that Jayne Bond has been sharing so far.

## **2. OVERVIEW OF ACTION WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN**

Lime and Aviate sit in unique positions in working so closely with many Tour Operators. The work we are undertaking is focussed on supporting our customers as best we can. Our staff have been working every day since this crisis began to try and mitigate the impact of FCO travel advice, schedule changes and flight cancellations as region-by-region worldwide flying ceased. We understand that as the ATOL principal this affects your business more than other sectors.

Our Operations staff have worked around the clock to prioritize the repatriation of your customers and to deal with those whose immediate travel plans have been disrupted.

With so many customers due to travel over Easter, booking volumes are considerable. Amongst other issues, we have triaged and actioned over 20,000 disruption related emails since 15 March. We have also received, actioned and posted online 348 airline policy updates from our 60 airline partners.

We are however, beginning to get ahead of the wave and intend to be in the best position to help you going forward.

### **3. REFUNDS AND EXCHANGE TRAVEL CREDITS – INCLUSIVE TOUR, SEAT ONLY, CRUISE AND PUBLISHED FARES.**

We understand that many airline policies – in particular those only offering Exchange Travel Credits and not granting refunds - leave you in a difficult position. We continue to lobby our airline partners to give further consideration to the exceptional position tour operators find yourselves in.

Where refunds are permitted, we have dedicated teams working through all requests in departure date order. It is important - where Refunds are allowed - you confirm that you wish us to process the Refund otherwise we will assume you wish to keep the original ticket 'open' so that you may re-use for your customers under each airline's Exchange Travel Credit scheme.

**To this end, our plan is to deliver Refunds back to you within the dates as set out in the table below.**

Please note, we expect most Tour Operators will prefer a Bank Transfer of their Refunds due rather than a credit on your account. To expedite this, we are working on a process to communicate and enable this. A further update will follow in the next Bulletin on Tuesday as to how we intend to process and confirm these Refunds – although this will not stop us commencing processing as many as possible now (as per the table). For your information, if we have your bank details then we will use this account and if not, we will call you to confirm your bank details.

Refund Timeline Table (also see note below Offline BSP Refunds)

<b>Processed for Refund (email confirmation sent to you by us)</b>	<b>Expected Departure Dates (If refund request received)</b>	<b>Expected Payment date (from airlines to us)*</b>	<b>Refunds paid to Tour Operator (at latest by)</b>
up to 15 Mar	up until 31 March	02-April	16-April
16 to 31 Mar	up until 31 March	17-April	01-May
01 to 15 April	01 to 22 April	04-May	18-May
16 to 30 April	23 April to 15 May	18-May	01-June

## FOR AVIATE

To help you establish the options for your bookings – future Exchange Travel Credits or Refunds - we have an Airline [Policy Summary](#) document available. For those clients wishing to rebook using their Exchange Travel Credits then see our guide for [here](#) for those passengers wanting a refund and, where the airline allows, you can fill in the Aviate Refund Request form [here](#) .

Airlines' policies can sometimes be difficult to interpret and are constantly evolving. To answer any Airline Policy queries, we have created a new e-mail help service: [disruption-queries@aviateworld.com](mailto:disruption-queries@aviateworld.com)

For Aviate airlines, the above dates and all Refunds are subject to these key factors and future airline updates, as matters evolve:

- We predict our forthcoming BSP 'payments' from 17 April onwards will actually be a financial credit due to Aviate from the airlines. IATA have already confirmed any payments due to us will be reimbursed promptly via the BSP scheme. We will need these clear funds from IATA before processing your Refunds to you.
- Offline BSP Refunds. Many airlines are preventing us, and their other consolidators, from claiming Refunds via the GDS but instead forcing us to create manual requests offline via the BSP scheme. This means each claim must be viewed and authorized by each airline and are unable to confirm when these will be actioned and therefore within which remittance, we will receive the payment through the BSP scheme. Our key airlines that are enforcing this currently (although it is a constantly changing situation) include for example: Lufthansa, Vietnam, Emirates, Virgin Atlantic, Turkish Airlines, Air France, KLM, Thai Airways, Oman Air, Norwegian, Singapore, Etc.

To manage expectations some airlines are stating 12 to 16 weeks for authorization from the BSP claim being processed by us.

We are obviously in discussions with all our airlines on this matter and, in the meantime, processing where we must via BSP. We are working to provide you with further information so that you are aware of the position with individual bookings. More to follow in forthcoming Bulletins.

## **FOR LIME AND ALL BA TICKETS**

To help you establish the options for your bookings – future Exchange Travel Credits or Refunds - we have updates related to British Airways policy on a Lime [Policy Summary](#) page. For those passengers, requiring a Refund, where the airline policy allows, and where the booking has not already been converted to an Exchange Travel Credit complete the [form here](#).

Please note, we operate a direct remittance payment schedule with BA and expect credit payments to us from the airline as per the above table.

To answer any British Airways policy queries, we have created a new e-mail help service [Disruption-queries@lime-management.com](mailto:Disruption-queries@lime-management.com).

### **4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM AND WITH US.**

- a. Websites. Our websites are constantly updated with latest policies and news.
  - i. Lime at <https://www.lime-management.com/coronavirus-outbreak/>
  - ii. Aviate at <https://www.aviateworld.com/coronavirus-outbreak/>
  
- b. Bulletin schedule. I will now issue these Bulletins each Tuesday and Friday for the foreseeable future to keep you update on key matters.
  
- c. Emails. This remains the best way to contact us. It is important to include in the Subject Field: Departure date, PNR and booking reference.
  
- d. Chat. We have our Chat services available and manned during normal office hours.
  
- e. Phones. Unfortunately, our phone system is an office-based system and is not adaptable for working from home (as we all are now). We know we must find a solution to this problem and are currently in discussions with suppliers. Sadly, it will not happen overnight, but rest assured we want to be back on the phones as soon as possible. In the meantime, hopefully the other channels of communication will give you the service you require.

## **5. SERVICE LEVEL UPDATES**

Across the group, teams are servicing all general emails that come in on the day that they are received. Please remember, if you email us after 16:00 you may not receive a response until the next working day.

6. **TOPICS FOR BULLETIN 2 (07 APRIL)** will also include:
- a. Group updates
  - b. Refunding process updates.

I hope you find these bulletins useful.

**Michael Edwards**  
**Managing Director**