

Template letter to Member of Parliament: request for an independent aviation ombudsman

[Your name]

[Your address]

[Postcode]

[Email address]

[Date]

[MP name]

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

Dear [MP name],

Re: Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL] — request for an independent aviation ombudsman

I am writing as one of your constituents to request that you make representations to the Government in support of amendments to the Civil Aviation (Consumer Protection and Regulatory Reform) Bill [HL] to provide for the establishment of a genuinely independent aviation ombudsman for communities affected by aviation regulatory decisions, including those relating to airspace change.

The Bill contains provisions concerning consumer protection, aviation regulation and airspace change. Although measures to strengthen passenger rights are to be welcomed, it is equally important that residents and communities affected by aircraft noise, air pollution, concentrated flight paths and wider environmental impacts should have access to clear, affordable and independent redress where regulatory decisions materially affect their daily lives.

At present, affected residents and community groups have only very limited practical avenues of challenge. Judicial review is prohibitively costly for many communities and is generally confined to matters of law and procedure rather than the substantive effects of a decision. Existing complaints mechanisms, including internal Civil Aviation Authority review, the Independent Complaints Assessor and referral via a Member of Parliament to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, do not amount to a direct, specialist and independent route of redress for communities seeking to challenge aviation regulatory outcomes (CAP1616 CAA consultation process).

This is of particular significance because decisions concerning airspace change can alter the skies above homes, schools and local communities for many years. If existing call-in or challenge routes are removed, narrowed or rendered less

accessible, affected communities may be left to bear the consequences of airspace redesign without any meaningful right of appeal other than costly litigation.

I therefore respectfully request that you urge Ministers to support amendments to the Bill establishing an independent aviation ombudsman with authority to review complaints from communities directly affected by Civil Aviation Authority regulatory decisions. This should include decisions relating to airspace redesign, the concentration of aircraft noise, environmental impact and the fairness and accessibility of consultation processes.

Such an ombudsman should be demonstrably independent of the Civil Aviation Authority and the aviation industry; accessible to residents and community organisations without prohibitive cost; empowered to consider the substance and practical impact of decisions, rather than procedure alone; and capable of making recommendations that strengthen transparency, fairness and public confidence.

I would be grateful if you would write to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Aviation Minister asking whether the Government will bring forward, or support, amendments to the Civil Aviation Bill to create such an independent oversight mechanism. I would also ask that you seek clarification as to what direct redress will be available to communities where regulatory decisions made under the Bill result in increased aircraft noise, pollution or environmental harm.

I would welcome your response and would be grateful to know what steps you are willing to take on behalf of constituents affected by aviation policy and airspace change.

Yours sincerely,
[Your name]