



# *Travel Innovation Group Bulletin Number 15*

*From Michael Edwards, Managing Director*

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Never did I imagine we would be in mid-October, facing new lockdowns and the likelihood of travel being further decimated for months to come - but this is the reality. The new Job Support Scheme lacks teeth for our industry and as there appears no government appetite for sector support, it is going to be a grim winter.

It is clear we all have our challenges. Having spoken to many of you, it is dark times and its clear we all *have* to think differently and find new ways of working together for everyone's benefit. Sadly, in these most difficult of times this is a must rather than a choice for many. I am hoping due to our particular position, the Travel Innovation Group can invigorate a debate with our tour operator partners to see how - together - we can find new ways to save costs, become more efficient and create revenue. In the next few days, I will follow up with further thoughts and communicate accordingly.

Here at the Travel Innovation Group, we have been restructuring (which sadly has led to a number of redundancies) and maximising efficiencies to ensure we are able to continue to provide you, our customers, with legendary service. That said, please give the team some understanding as we adjust to the new structures, whilst continuing to action refunds and updating you as schedules, flight cancellations, airline policies, etc. unfold. As always we will keep you updated on matters and assure you at the heart of what we do is that **We Are With You.**

On an encouraging note, many of the airlines that held back refunds have now allowed us to make the claims through the normal GDS channel. This means we have now transacted the back log of refund claims for Emirates, Virgin and Etihad. This current refund cycle's total value is circa £1.6million, therefore we are working as hard as ever to get these to you by 2 November.

I am also pleased to share more positive news around our technology developments - built to help you and enhance your experience of working with us (section 3) and some airline updates including more flexible policies from key partners in section 4.

# 2 REFUND PAYMENT CYCLES

## a. Lime and Aviate (inc VAFS) Flights GDS

To date we have completed 12 refund cycles, with the tables below showing the more recent. We are on track to make our Flights GDS refund payments, due on 2 November including the significant backlog of Emirates, Etihad and Virgin Atlantic refunds as referenced in my introduction.

Processed for Refund (email confirmation sent to you by us)	Expected Payment date (from airlines to us)	Refunds paid to Tour Operator (at latest by)	Cycle complete
1 to 16 August	2 September	16 September	✓
17 to 31 August	17 September	1 October	✓
1 to 15 September	2 October	16 October	✓
16 to 30 September	17 October	2 November	
1 to 15 October	2 November*	16 November	
16 to 31 October	17 November*	2 December	

\*We will need these clear funds from IATA/the airlines before processing your Refunds to you. Refunds will be made back to the original form of payment.

## 2 REFUND PAYMENT CYCLES

### b. Aviate Flights BSPLink

This table represents some of our higher volume airlines who are insisting on manually managing refunds via BSPLink. Please be reminded that these payment timescales are an estimate and as evident from the text following the table, are changeable depending on the airline's circumstances.

Key airlines	Estimated payment from airline to Aviate from processed date (email confirmation sent to you by us)	Refunds paid to Tour Operator (estimated at latest)
SQ/VN	7-9 weeks	+2 weeks
WY/UX/TP/MH	6 months	+2 weeks
MK	6 months	+2 weeks
DY	Ad-hoc	+2 weeks

Air Mauritius have informed us that they're not accepting any refunds until December due to finalising their voluntary administration, we anticipate in this case that we can begin to send our email confirmations to you from December for any MK requests that you haven't had processed up to then.

Unfortunately we have not yet seen any refunds from Norwegian, and do not have an estimate for South African Airways.

### c. Lime (British Airways) and Aviate airlines Groups

The below table shows only the most recently completed cycles. The previous cycles were completed to schedule.

<b>Group booking cancelled (email confirmation sent to you by us)</b>	<b>Expected payment date (from airline to Lime) for Deposit Paid, Fully Paid &amp; Ticketed</b>	<b>Refunds paid to Groups agent (at latest)</b>	<b>Cycle complete</b>
16 to 31 July	24 August	7 September	✓
1 to 16 August	2 September	21 September	✓
17 to 31 August	17 September	7 October	✓
1 to 15 September	2 October	23 October	
16 to 30 September	16 October	6 November	
1 to 15 October	2 November*	23 November	
16 to 31 October	16 November*	7 December	

\*We will need these clear funds from IATA/the airlines before processing your Refunds to you. Refunds will be made back to the original form of payment.

# 2 REFUND PAYMENT CYCLES

# 3

## WE ARE WITH YOU: MARKET LEADING TECHNOLOGY

Innovation is one of our core principles, and a key contributor in our **We Are With You** difference. Our technology is market-leading as we continue to innovate already unique software to evolve with our users and adapt to our industry. I'd like to share just a sample of the newer or upcoming functions that Flights systems across TIG offer:

### a. API

Our powerful integration offering a fully automated airfare and (selected) ancillaries booking solution to businesses that rely on further systems to manage their wider travel offering. Our single source connection opens up our entire live inventory including hundreds of airline partners and a range of nett fare types across GDS and NDC channels. integrated seamlessly with your bookable website, back or mid-office system - our API provides control from availability to ticketing, booking data, in-depth fare rules and product information.

We're currently connected with suppliers such as Dolphin, Anteeo, Inspiretec, Goranga Tech and Penguin, and able to develop to other systems as required.

If you're interested in the increased efficiency and revenue potential that our API solution offers, [complete this form](#) or contact [Naomi Moizer](#) our Partnership and New Business Manager.

# 3

## WE ARE WITH YOU: MARKET LEADING TECHNOLOGY

### b. Cache

Some of our customers approached us for distribution solutions that complement their high volume business model. Following several months of development we are now live with our low fare search cache, which enables high-volume searches without losing speed to market.

We'd be happy to hear your suggestions on ways that we can support you in growing your flights business – when the opportunity returns that is. Contact [Naomi Moizer](#) to discuss your vision or hurdles.

### c. Ticketing robots

Our ticketing robot brings added automation to our ticketing function. At present our GDS users are using an 'instant ticketing' robot option which replaces their need to pull bookings into our Flights system for ticketing, with the ability to queue from their own GDS into ours on the day they wish to ticket.

Within the next couple of weeks we will enhance this function for GDS users, offering a 'scheduled ticketing' option where ticketing can be queued from their GDS (as with the 'instant ticketing' option) far in advance of the Ticket Time Limit TTL. Behind the scenes, the booking is registered by our robot which tickets it within a pre-agreed window before the TTL. This functionality is particularly beneficial to businesses offering an instant purchase model but wishing to take advantage of the airline's longer deadlines.

Full information on the scheduled ticketing robot for GDS users will be released via email when it is available, followed by a release for non-GDS users shortly after.

# 4 AIRLINE POLICIES AND NEWS

## a. Policy chart and updates

We have collated a very top level comparison chart across our 10 highest volume carriers in this section, intended to provide an overview of which airlines include more generous clauses in their COVID disruption policies, and faster refund methods.

Please note that each airline will have their own criteria within each clause, which can be found in the airline's full policy which is accessed via our [Lime](#) and [Aviate](#) websites. These full policies should always be referred to, along with the fare rules, when creating new bookings or taking action on existing bookings.

Airline	Full refunds permitted (in circumstances <u>other</u> than airline cancellation/major schedule change)	Refunds via GDS (as opposed to via BSPLink, which can take much longer)	Fare difference covered by airline when rebooking (if rebooking same cabin to same destination)	Bonus for rebooking	Complimentary COVID-19 cover included
Air Canada	X	✓	X	X	X
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				
American Airlines	X	✓	X	X	X
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				
Air France/ KLM	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				
British Airways	X	✓	X	X	X
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				
Delta Air Lines	X	✓	X	X	X
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				
Emirates	✓	✓	✓	X	✓ <a href="#">See COVID cover details</a>
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				
Etihad Airways	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ <a href="#">See COVID cover details</a>
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				
Qatar Airways	✓	✓	✓	X	X
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				
Singapore Airlines	X	X	X	✓	X
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				
Virgin Atlantic	X	✓	✓	X	✓ <a href="#">See COVID cover details</a>
	<a href="#">See details in airline's policy</a>				

This table is based on ITX fares. Refer to airline policy pages for advice on other fare

# 4

## AIRLINE POLICIES AND NEWS

### - British Airways ticket deadline waiver

To assist the trade in this changeable climate, British Airways have replaced Ticket Time Limits (TTLs) on ITX bookings made before 6 October 2020 (due to travel outbound by 14 March 2021) with a delayed ticketing deadline of departure -14 days. Lime were able to adjust our Flights system to manage these new deadlines (a challenge, as the deadline was not reflected in the fare rules) to allow deadline reminders to be generated as usual in our systems. Those of our customers booking in their GDS will need to manage their own deadlines on these waived bookings.

Review our recent notifications to users with affected bookings here:

- Flights system bookers:  
<https://limenotifications.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/d/3C424F6686C030F72540EF23F30FEDED/C54A48931EC32BCDDBC23BD704D2542D>
- GDS bookers:  
<https://limenotifications.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/d/87CDCB4F46C17FF52540EF23F30FEDED/C54A48931EC32BCDDBC23BD704D2542D>

We are championing a delayed TTL policy for new bookings with British Airways, we will of course inform you if we are alerted to one.

### - British Airways Policy updates

- Flights (Inclusive Tour, Seat Only, Published fares) – from 9 October 2020, the existing policy that offers a flight change or Exchange Travel Credit has been updated to apply to new bookings created from 3 March 2020 onwards, as opposed to stating an end date. Other criteria applicable, see details here: <https://www.lime-management.com/coronavirus-outbreak/>
- Groups – from 29 September, the existing policy now applies to bookings travelling up to 31 March 2021 with non-ticketed bookings now able to cancel up to 30 days prior to departure. See details here <https://www.lime-management.com/coronavirus-outbreak/>

# 4

## AIRLINE POLICIES AND NEWS

### - Virgin Atlantic policy update from 6 October 2020

Rebook for travel has been extended to 31 December 2022, with a waiver for any fare difference for Economy up to £60, Premium up to £120 and Upper up to £350 round-trip.

Details found here: <https://www.vaflightstore.com/media/2181/vsbulletin-06oct20.pdf>

### - Middle East carriers enhance Book with Confidence measures

Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways have released guidelines on flexibility for ticketed bookings.

Details found here:

[aviatemanagement.cmail19.com/t/ViewEmail/j/103292A757C17FD02540EF23F30FEDED/A59232C46127E97EAF060D6555554232](mailto:aviatemanagement.cmail19.com/t/ViewEmail/j/103292A757C17FD02540EF23F30FEDED/A59232C46127E97EAF060D6555554232)

### - Oman Air introduce Covid cover

On bookings created from 1 October 2020, the airline will include cover for medical, quarantine and repatriation expenses whilst overseas plus 24:7 assistance to anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 whilst in destination.

Details found here: <https://www.aviateworld.com/news/oman-air-complimentary-covid-19-coverage>

# 4 AIRLINE POLICIES AND NEWS

## b. Airline partner news

### - Virgin Atlantic announce new services to India

On sale from 20 October 2020, the airline launches a Manchester to Delhi service from 19 December 2020 followed by Manchester – Mumbai on 5 January 2021.

### - Virgin Atlantic VFR fares

We now have the full range of VFR which we can offer to tour operators and agents on request.

For more details email: [sales@vaflightstore.com](mailto:sales@vaflightstore.com)

### - Virgin Atlantic Out of Date Range now on sale for 2022

Confirm flights for Orlando for all dates in 2022 for just £75pp deposit. Bookings taken for all Virgin Atlantic destinations.

For quotes email: [odr@vaflightstore.com](mailto:odr@vaflightstore.com)

### - New British Airways CEO on pre-departure testing, and his priorities in new role

Previous Aer Lingus boss Sean Doyle was recently announced to have [replaced Alex Cruz](#) as CEO of British Airways. In his first address at the Airlines 2051 summit, Sean highlights IATAs recent report into the low risk of COVID-19 spreading via air travel, and supports the calls for pre-departure testing for passenger assurance amongst other insightful topics.

View the CEO's speech here: [https://d1btjlf89lsb3b.cloudfront.net/BrandID86/720-mp4/Sean-Doyle-Oct-V3\\_5f8d60f5c2477\\_1603100917.mp4](https://d1btjlf89lsb3b.cloudfront.net/BrandID86/720-mp4/Sean-Doyle-Oct-V3_5f8d60f5c2477_1603100917.mp4)

### - Oman Air cancel Manchester flight

Oman Air have made the decision to suspend their Manchester to Muscat service until further notice. We have applied for refunds on behalf of those customers holding affected bookings.

Don't forget to provide your customers with the gov.uk link containing information and a mandatory form for completion within 48 hours of their return to the UK:  
<https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk>  
and to check entry requirements of the intended destination before travel commences.

*Michael Edwards*

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