



PRESS RELEASE
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When it comes to travel protection – it pays to check the smallprint, says Travel Counsellors

Travel customers should take care to read the smallprint when it comes to financial protection for their holidays, says leading independent travel company Travel Counsellors.

Currently there are a number of advertising campaigns on the issue of travel protection on the TV and in the press, offering various degrees of protection for the customer.

But Travel Counsellors argues that customers should receive all-encompassing travel protection for any arrangements they want to make, not just ATOL protection for package holidays, or protection that only applies up to a certain value or during a specific time frame. ABTA also no longer guarantees financial protection.

It follows the collapse of companies such as XL Leisure Group and Zoom Airways at the end of last year, which saw thousands of passengers lose their money due to lack of financial protection when booking their holidays whereas all Travel Counsellors customers not only received their money back, but benefited from having their own personal travel expert putting in place alternative travel arrangements for them.

The protection offered by Travel Counsellors through the Travel Counsellors Trust Fund since 2004 is completely free of charge and covers anything the customer chooses to book including hotels, low cost airlines, scheduled flights and car rental. It covers all bookings irrespective of when they were made, departure date or value, and is not guaranteed for only a limited period of time.

The issue of financial protection for travellers has become more prominent in the current economic climate.

Commenting on the issue Travel Counsellors chairman David Speakman says: "I am delighted that other travel companies at last seem to be taking the issue of financial protection seriously. But I am still concerned that the issue is being fudged and that a customer will need to read the small print to see whether they are covered or not".

Travel Counsellors points out that the CAA's ATOL scheme provides excellent protection but only if the holiday bought is actually ATOL protected. ATOL is not all-encompassing as it only covers charter flights, air package holidays and scheduled flights booked through a consolidator. Many customers require tailor made travel arrangements which may not be covered by ATOL protection.

Adds Mr Speakman: "We now need the travel industry to take the next logical step on this issue and that is to bring in financial protection for anything the customer may want to book, with no strings attached."

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About Travel Counsellors: Travel Counsellors is the world's largest home-based travel company with turnover at the end of its last financial year (Oct 31 2008) of £245 million, a 16% increase year on year. Founded in 1994 it currently has over 1,000 travel consultants who work from home with the support of over 240 staff at the company's UK headquarters in Bolton and overseas offices. The company operates in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, South Africa, Australia, Canada and the US. In the UK Travel Counsellors places all customer money in a



Trust account which guarantees a 100% refund in the event that a supplier collapses. Travel Counsellors was the winner of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2003-2008, the technology category of the 2005 CBI Growing Business Awards and was voted Travel Agent of the Year by readers of the Guardian, Observer and Guardian Unlimited in 2006 & 2007.

Please note: Travel Counsellors' founder & Chairman David Speakman is available for comment

For further information contact:

Victoria Fox or Helen Furnivall

Tel: 00 44 1204 536 191 / 002

E-mail: victoria.fox@travelcounsellors.com / helen.furnivall@travelcounsellors.com