

Media statement on release of the ministerial review into the Authority's organisational culture

Thursday 21 May 2020

The Board of the Civil Aviation Authority has ordered a top to bottom revamp of all practices to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of staff following a ministerial review into the Authority's organisational culture.

"The Board is concerned and dismayed by the findings of the review, and at how long it's taken to address fundamental issues," says its Chairman, Janice Fredric.

"The report shows there are serious problems needing to be fixed. While they're not universal across the organisation, we need to have zero tolerance of bullying, harassment and discrimination. It's clear we've had some of the right policies, but we've failed to implement them consistently.

"I'm heartened to read in the report that staff like working for us and are committed to serving the travelling public and the aviation industry. But all staff must be safe at work, and the Board is determined to ensure that from now on they are. Directors have very specific duties and obligations to ensure the both the safety and wellbeing of staff.

"We urgently need to build staff trust and confidence, so now it's time for actions, not words. We will work with staff and their unions on how to build a safe, positive and supportive culture, and ensure all staff at all levels make the necessary changes.

"We will be making changes in many areas. For example we will review the code of conduct. We will see that people are held accountable for breaches. We will make any necessary changes to our hiring practices, our employment agreements and our training. We will strengthen and speed up the complaints process. And we will carefully monitor and assess the effectiveness of the culture change programme against specific objectives.

"As Chairman I am making it my business to see all the recommendations in the report are actioned. I am personally chairing a new Board sub-committee to oversee this work. The Board will also be requiring regular reporting and measurement of cultural change. I am determined that this report will mark a definite turning point for the Civil Aviation Authority and the Aviation Security Service."

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Notes for editors:

The review was ordered on 24 September 2019 by Transport Minister Twyford. The Ministry of Transport led the review, and appointed independent specialists RDC Group and barrister Rachael Schmidt-McCleave to provide external support. The Review team was tasked with focussing on three areas:

- reviewing reports of bullying and harassment to understand how they were addressed;
- conducting a workplace culture assessment; and
- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to promote staff wellbeing and a culture of 'speaking up'.

The review involved 120 confidential interviews with past and present staff members, managers, Board members and stakeholders, together with an assessment of organisational culture.