

Make sure you're in the travel safety net!



Jon Wilby, Partner and head of our Litigation Department, advises that the collapse of XL Leisure, the UK's third largest tour operator, and the continuing uncertainty about the financial position of some other airlines and operators, has left many people feeling as though they can only really relax once their plane has safely delivered them back home after their holiday.

Jon believes, however, that the collapse has highlighted reasons for travellers to feel reassured. "Even though the XL failure did suggest that almost no travel business is safe in the current environment, it also shows clearly that the payment protection systems that are in place to ensure refunds really do work."

The great majority of people booked to travel with XL have already received refunds or are set to do so in the near future. This is thanks to three safety nets in place to help in just these circumstances:

- The Civil Airline Authority's (CAA) Air Travel Organisers' Licensing (ATOL) scheme protects payments made via bonded travel agents and tour operators;
- Payments made on a credit card or VISA debit card are protected by the Consumer Credit Act, which guarantees a refund if goods or services worth between £100 and £30,000 are not delivered;
- Some travel insurance policies cover scheduled flights, meaning that people already abroad can be assured of getting home without additional costs.

Jon Wilby continues "Of course, there were some unfortunate people who haven't been able to reclaim their money – those who paid XL directly and used a non-Visa debit card.

"The lessons are clear, however. Book via an agent, use a credit card and get the best travel insurance cover you can. If you believe you are being mistreated, however, it may well help to talk to a solicitor, and we're very happy to take calls on 024 7663 2121."