

Richard Moriarty
Chief Executive of the Civil Aviation Authority
Civil Aviation Authority
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Dear Richard,

I want to alert you to what seems to be an important and serious consumer rights abuse by a major airline.

MoneySavingExpert.com has received hundreds of complaints from Ryanair customers who tell us they have been penalised for incorrect surnames on their bookings, despite them having correctly entered these details at the time of booking. This error is not the fault of the customer, yet Ryanair has been charging those affected £115 to rectify what seems to be its own mistake.

We have tried to engage with Ryanair on this issue, yet it has refused to accept there is a problem – despite the compelling evidence – and its response has been flaccid. It cannot be right that Ryanair is denying a refund to customers who have been affected, especially because if passengers don't pay the charge, they are unable to travel as their passport and ticket names won't match.

From the evidence MSE has collected, a clear pattern has emerged, likely indicating a systemic error:

- Passengers were booking flights for a second person (or more) with different surnames, for example their partner, or for a group of friends.
- These customers consistently claim Ryanair's booking system automatically changed their companions' surnames to be the same as the lead passenger or account holder's surname.
- Those who didn't spot the error within Ryanair's 24-hour grace period for free name changes have been left facing a £115 charge to change it to the correct name – many have already paid it.
- Some customers have had to rebook their flights entirely, as this was cheaper than paying the charge.

We have made several attempts to communicate directly with Ryanair. It initially insisted there was no glitch and that the fee for those affected would not be waived, and has refused to comment any further.

We have had more than 160 Ryanair customers to date saying they have encountered the problem, who are willing to be included in a dossier, which is enclosed for your attention. This is not for publication, in order to protect the privacy of the customers involved. Given the repeated and widespread nature of these errors, and Ryanair's clear unwillingness to engage with the issue, we believe it is time for regulatory intervention to protect customers.

Ryanair must be compelled to find out what the problem is, prevent it from reoccurring and ensure those impacted are not left out of pocket.

I look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Martin Lewis
Founder & Chair, MoneySavingExpert.com
Encs.