

## **Advice Column – Tour Operator goes bust**

**My daughter and her boyfriend lost money when the tour operator they had booked their holiday with went bust some months ago. Since then they've been trying in vain to get a refund but have almost given up as they seem to be getting nowhere despite endless phone calls and emails. Is there anything more they can do?**

The first thing to check is whether your daughter and her boyfriend bought a 'package holiday' (this is a deal that includes at least two of these elements: transport; accommodation; other tourist services that are a significant component of the deal, and it's prearranged and was sold for an inclusive price, and it lasts more than 24 hours or includes an overnight stay.) They might have bought accommodation and travel from separate companies.

If it's a package there are regulations that cover things like your rights to certain information before the holiday, cancelling if the dates or price are changed, and a scheme to protect your money and get you home if the tour operator goes bust.

If you book a package holiday which includes air travel you should be protected by the Air Travel Organiser's Licensing (ATOL) scheme. This means that you should be refunded for the full cost of the holiday if you have not yet travelled.

If you have already travelled, ATOL (or whichever alternative protection scheme the operator is using) should meet the costs of the rest of your holiday, for example the cost of the hotel if the operator hasn't paid them, so that you do not have to come home early. If arrangements cannot be made for you to complete the rest of your holiday, or the airline goes bust when you are away, ATOL should make sure that you are not stranded.

If your package holiday was booked through a retailer, such as a travel agent, you should be offered an alternative holiday.

Details of how to make a claim under the ATOL scheme can be found on: [www.atol.org.uk](http://www.atol.org.uk).

If your daughter and her boyfriend paid for their holiday by credit card, and it cost more than £100, they may be able to make a claim against the credit card company. They should also check whether their travel insurance policy covers them for their holiday trader going out of business.

If they have tried getting their money back through the scheme their tour operator is using without success, they should get advice and help on what their options are now from a CAB adviser (see [adviceguide.org.uk](http://adviceguide.org.uk) for more information and contact details of your nearest CAB) or Consumer Direct ([consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://consumerdirect.gov.uk)).