

**Finance and Corporate Services**  
Information Management

15 March 2011  
FOIA reference: F0001130

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent application of 18 February 2011, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

*"I would like details of the numbers of complaints received by the CAA in relation to helicopters. I would like to know what these complaints were about and what areas of the country they originated from.*

*I would like this information for the period 2006 to the current date".*

Our response:

In assessing your request in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we are pleased to be able to provide the information below.

The CAA Directorate of Airspace Policy (DAP) provides a focal point for receiving and responding to aviation related environmental issues, such as noise.

The DAP can confirm that they have received the following helicopter related enquiries/complaints since the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006:

Call ID	Description	Total Number of Calls	% of total calls
6	Helicopter Private Site	555	5.43
16	Police Helicopter	288	2.82
22	London Helicopter Routes	504	4.93
24	Helicopter General	849	8.31

It is important to note that multiple enquiry numbers may have been used for a single enquiry/complaint – for example a piece of correspondence concerning a private helicopter site may be placed on the database under numbers 6 and 24.

The CAA records such complaints on a database, which contains approximately 2,196 helicopter related enquiries/complaints. The database cannot be searched based on location, so in order to meet this part of your request the CAA would have to review each individual record to extract the location.

**Civil Aviation Authority**

Aviation House GW Gatwick Airport South Crawley West Sussex England RH6 0YR [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)  
Telephone 01293 768512 rick.chatfield@caa.co.uk

We estimate that, based on around 1.5 minutes to review each record, this would involve approximately 134 hours of work.

Aviation Regulation Enforcement (ARE) is responsible for investigating alleged breaches of the aviation safety legislation and where appropriate, undertaking prosecutions or other enforcement actions

ARE division have also received complaints regarding helicopters. However, this information is either received directly from the public or via the Directorate of Airspace Policy (DAP). Without reviewing each file we are unable to determine who submitted the complaint. Therefore some of the complaints within the following statistics may have already been collated in the table above.

ARE received 124 complaints regarding helicopters which have all been dealt with accordingly

ARE have formally investigated 79 cases involving helicopters from 1 January 2008 to date from various locations all over the UK. 7 of these resulted in a prosecution. The remainder of complaints received by ARE did not result in a formal investigation.

Prosecution information is published on the CAA's website at the following address:

<http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=503&pagetype=90&pageid=6484>

It must be pointed out however, that the information published is basic and it is not possible to identify which ones are helicopter related.

ARE estimate that in order to fully comply with your request they would have to review each file separately at a time of 3 minutes per file. This equates to 6.2 Hours. These hours have been added to the estimated cost above

While the information you have requested is held by the CAA, we have estimated that the cost of complying fully with the request would be approximately £3505 (140.2 Hours at £25 per hour) and therefore exceeds the appropriate limit of £450, under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

Section 12 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit (a copy of this exemption can be found below). We are therefore, unable to comply with your request.

If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you should approach the CAA in writing at:-

Mark Stevens  
External Response Manager  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Aviation House  
Gatwick Airport South  
West Sussex  
RH6 0YR

[mark.stevens@caa.co.uk](mailto:mark.stevens@caa.co.uk)

The CAA has a formal internal review process for dealing with appeals or complaints in connection with Freedom of Information requests. The key steps in this process are set in the attachment.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner at:-

Information Commissioner's Office  
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
[www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx)

Should you wish to make further Freedom of Information requests, please use the e-form at <http://www.caa.co.uk/foi>.

Yours sincerely

Rick Chatfield  
FoIA & EIR Case Manager

## **CAA INTERNAL REVIEW & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

- The original case to which the appeal or complaint relates is identified and the case file is made available;
- The appeal or complaint is allocated to an Appeal Manager, the appeal is acknowledged and the details of the Appeal Manager are provided to the applicant;
- The Appeal Manager reviews the case to understand the nature of the appeal or complaint, reviews the actions and decisions taken in connection with the original case and takes account of any new information that may have been received. This will typically require contact with those persons involved in the original case and consultation with the CAA Legal Department;
- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and with the CAA Legal Department, agrees on the course of action to be taken;
- The Appeal Manager prepares the necessary response and collates any information to be provided to the applicant;
- The response and any necessary information is sent to the applicant, together with information about further rights of appeal to the Information Commissioners Office, including full contact details.

## **Freedom of Information Act : Section 12**

### **Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit.**

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

(2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

(3) In subsections (1) and (2) "the appropriate limit" means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

(4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority-

(a) by one person, or

(b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign,

the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.

(5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.