

Finance and Corporate Services
Information Management

29 March 2012
FOIA reference: F0001312

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent application of 20 March 2012 and subsequent email dated 29 March 2012, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

“The list provided is of aircraft activity over Swindon that I have logged. This activity is not what we normally associate with commercial traffic for this area

- 1. Why are these aircraft operational in our airspace on a weekly basis?*
- 2. Whose aircraft are they?*
- 3. What are they doing?”*

Our response:

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

The CAA does not hold the specific information that you have requested. The CAA is the UK's independent regulator of civil aviation; and whilst the CAA does have access to aircraft flightpath information in close proximity to Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports, it does not have the requirement or the resources to monitor individual aircraft movements.

The portion of controlled airspace under which you live is extremely busy with the following:

- High-level overflights from the European Continent heading for the North Atlantic routes (These aircraft will produce contrails during normal weather conditions). A number of upper air routes associated with these flights intersect near your location and this will lead to contrail patterns forming.
- Aircraft descending towards airports in the South East at levels unlikely to result in contrails.
- Aircraft climbing out from airports in the South East. Most will not climb high enough to produce contrails, although some may.

Civil Aviation Authority

Aviation House GW Gatwick Airport South Crawley West Sussex England RH6 0YR www.caa.co.uk
Telephone 01293 768512 rick.chatfield@caa.co.uk

In response to your specific questions:

1. There will be a large number of commercial aircraft overflying your location due to the air routes established above. Whilst the CAA does not monitor these aircraft, there is no evidence to suggest that anything other than normal aviation operations are occurring. Military and General Aviation (Light Aviation) will also legitimately pass through the area.
2. The aircraft operating on the routes above your location will belong to a wide variety of airlines; other aircraft in the vicinity will belong to the Ministry of Defence and private aircraft owners.
3. We would again emphasise that the CAA does not monitor individual aircraft movements; therefore, we cannot provide individual motives for each flight. It is likely that the aircraft utilising the controlled airspace above Swindon are doing so as part of their commercial operations. Military aircraft will be transiting to training areas or routing between bases and private aircraft will be undertaking recreational flying.

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

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

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.