

28 February 2014
FOIA reference: F0001837

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent request dated 10 February 2014, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

- *“The number of night time (after 7pm) helicopter and light aircraft flights over the NW10 5AN post code in 2013.*
- *The average number of night time (after 7pm) helicopter and light aircraft flights over a London post code in 2013.*
- *The average number of night time (after 7pm) helicopter and light aircraft flights over a Brent borough post code in 2013.”*

Our response:

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

The CAA is not directly involved in the provision of air traffic control services nor is it responsible for monitoring individual aircraft movements. Consequently, the CAA does not hold any information relevant to your request.

We have, however, enclosed a CAA Information Sheet concerning helicopter activity over London that you may find of interest.

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

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>.

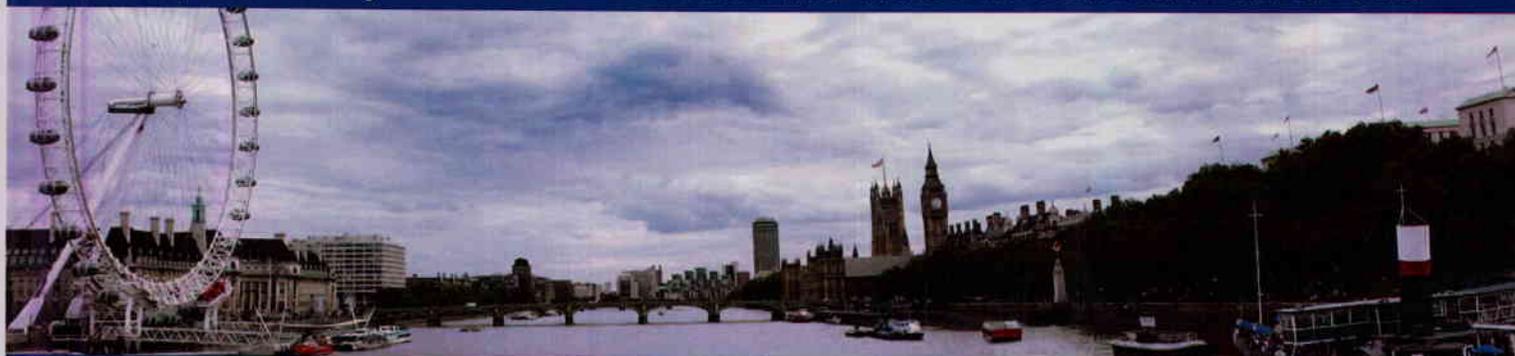
Yours sincerely

Rick Chatfield
Information Rights and Enquiries Officer

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.

Helicopter Activity over Central London and within the London Control Zone



London Control Zone (CTR)

The London Control Zone (CTR) is a portion of Controlled Airspace (CAS) that is established for the protection of aircraft operating into or out of London Heathrow airport. The CTR extends vertically from surface level up to an altitude of 2,500 feet and laterally to approximately 10 miles from the airport. Any aircraft wishing to operate within CAS must have Air Traffic Control (ATC) Clearance and be in receipt of an ATC service, ensuring that they comply with the instructions issued at all times. All flights within the London CTR are considered legitimate providing the conditions of the required ATC clearance are complied with and that no rules are breached.

Helicopter routes have long been established within the CAS above Central London to ensure the safe integration of helicopter transits with aircraft inbound to London Heathrow airport; a chart displaying the helicopter routes over London can be found below. The rules and procedures for flights on these routes are as follows:

- The helicopter routes have been selected to provide maximum safety by avoiding built up areas as much as possible.
- All helicopters flying in the Zone are subject to an ATC clearance and particular visibility minima.
- In the main, pilots navigate by visual reference to ground features with only limited ATC Radar assistance.
- The height for each section of helicopter route is the maximum height permissible and which is designed to ensure vertical separation between the helicopters and Heathrow fixed-wing traffic.
- On all routes, in order to minimise noise nuisance, pilots should maintain the maximum altitude compatible with their ATC clearance and with the prevailing cloud conditions.
- Pilots should fly precise routes as depicted in the chart - "corner cutting is to be avoided".
- In order to obtain sufficient lateral separation from opposite direction traffic, pilots may temporarily deviate to the right of the route.
- Throughout, pilots are constrained by the normal 'Rules of the Air Regulations' that precludes flight closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle or structure.
- Helicopters may be required to hold at any of the locations designated as a holding point.
- There are no constraints on the hours of operation of helicopter routes.

Multi-Engine Helicopters

Whilst single engine helicopters must always follow the helicopter routes, it should be noted that multi-engine helicopters can be provided with an air traffic control clearance to transit elsewhere throughout the London CTR.

Restricted Areas

There are a number of Restricted Areas that lie within both the London and London City CTR's; the boundaries of which are clearly displayed on the London Helicopter chart overleaf. A restricted area is an area of defined dimensions within which the flight of aircraft is restricted in accordance with certain specified conditions. The following offers a brief summary of the Restricted Areas and the conditions attached to them:

EG R157 (Hyde Park), EG R158 (City of London) and EG R159 (Isle of Dogs) are all established from surface level up to 1,400 feet. Flights are permitted within each of these restricted areas providing they are in the service of the Chief of Police for the Metropolitan Police District, are flying in accordance with a Special Flight Notification (SFN) issued by the appropriate ATC unit, are flying along Helicopter Route H4, or are flying in accordance with an Enhanced Non-Standard Flight (ENSF) clearance issued by the appropriate ATC unit.

SFN's can be applied to a variety of special aerial tasks, which may take place throughout an extended period of time. The most common are Police Authority Air Support Unit (ASU) and Air Operations Unit (AOU) flights, Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) flights and HM Government-sponsored flights (including Ministry of Defence and other flights). The nature of SFN flights is such that they will often require to be afforded priority over most other flights.

ENSF's are subject to security considerations by the Metropolitan Police and may be refused on public interest grounds. There are a number of helicopter operators that have an annual ENSF clearance due to the numerous tasks that they are required to undertake within the restricted areas, for example, those operators responsible for conducting aerial filming on behalf of the major TV News channels. On any occasion that such operators wish to manoeuvre within any of the restricted areas, they are required to obtain a permission number from the Diplomatic Protection Group (DPG), which validates their flight within it.

EG R160 (The Specified Area) is the largest restricted area and is established from surface level upwards. Except with the written permission of the CAA, a helicopter shall not fly over the Specified Area of Central London below such a height as would enable it, in the event of an engine failure, to land clear of that area. Whilst single engine helicopters must always follow the helicopter routes, multi-engine helicopters can be provided with an air traffic control clearance to transit elsewhere throughout the London CTR.

EG R107 (Belmarsh) is established from surface level up to 2,000 feet. EG R107 only restricts flight of helicopters and flights within it are permitted by any helicopter for the purpose of carrying out an Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) approach to London City airport for cloud break purposes and to any helicopter operated by or on behalf of a police force for any area of the United Kingdom.

Further information on Restricted Areas, SFN's and ENSF's is published in the En-route section of the UK Aeronautical Information Publication, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

