

13 March 2015
EIR Reference: E0002212

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your request of 28 January 2015, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). I am very conscious that you have had to wait a long time to receive a reply from the CAA to your request and for that I apologise.

Your request:

I live in Windlesham, Surrey. Since the beginning of September 2014, we have been plagued by aircraft noise, which has continued after the early termination of the departure trials over Ascot in mid November 2014. The noise is caused by both aircraft departing on westerly operations (Midhurst route) and also aircraft arriving on easterly operations. My questions relate to this noise.

In July 2013, the CAA published a document called the "Future Airspace Strategy (FAS):UK Continuous Climb Operations (CCOs) Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA): CAP 1062.

1 Have Heathrow introduced continuous climb operations over our area (Windlesham area under the Midhurst route) and if so, when?

2 If the answer to the first question is "yes", did we previously have level flight over our area? I ask this because of the following clause in your document.

"Currently (ie July 2013) many departures, mainly in the London terminal environment, level off at between four thousand and seven thousand feet in order to avoid incoming traffic, not allowing for fully systemised CCOs." (CI 5.19)

3 Have Heathrow introduced continuous descent over our area and if so, when? I ask this because of the following clause in your document.

"Consequently, the optimum design within a TMA is likely to be a highly systemised structure of 2 and 3-D routes that incorporate continuous climb and continuous descent operations." (CI 4.5)

4 If the answer to question 3 is "yes", did we previously have level flight over our area?

Civil Aviation Authority

Aviation House Gatwick Airport South Gatwick RH6 0YR www.caa.co.uk

Telephone 01293 768512 foi.requests@caa.co.uk

Our response:

Having considered your request in line with the provisions of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, we are able to provide the information below.

The principle of Continuous Climb Operations (CCO) is to provide a continuous climb from take-off to optimum cruise level (as opposed to climb, level off, climb level off, which burns more fuel so producing greater emissions). Currently within the UK, aircraft can be offered a continuous climb if the airspace structure design permits it to occur and that aircraft is cleared to do so by an air traffic controller taking into account the actual conditions at that time which includes the location of other arriving, departing and en-route aircraft in that airspace; however CCO are not included in the Standard Instrument Departures (SIDs) and cannot be offered on a routine basis. This is due to the complexity of the current airspace design from a number of factors, such as the close proximity of other airports, the need to level off aircraft to de-conflict with another aircraft trajectory and the use of, and need to avoid, airborne holding stacks.

Controllers will always endeavour to provide aircraft with continuous climb, subject to other traffic, for the efficient use of airspace and to minimise noise at ground level. The complexity of the airspace in the South East of the UK means it currently cannot be offered on a routine basis without major redesigns of the UK's airspace structure, which the UK's Future Airspace Strategy (FAS) is designed to achieve.

Continuous Descent Operations (CDO) have been in place for many years and essentially allow controllers, subject to weather and other traffic, to allow aircraft to descend at an optimum descent rate and with minimum power (and hence a reduced noise envelope) towards the final approach for a given runway. Whether a particular aircraft over your location is descending under CDO, or is in level flight, will depend on many factors including the runway in use, weather, and other traffic.

In summary, CCO and CDO have not been introduced in the sense that the benefits of FAS have been realised, as FAS considers the development of the UK's airspace system from 2011 to 2030 and requires major redesigns of the UK's airspace structure. However, both CCO and CDO are offered by air traffic controllers to aircraft, in any airspace, where possible.

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:-

Caroline Chalk
Head of External Information Services
Civil Aviation Authority
Aviation House
Gatwick Airport South
Gatwick
RH6 0YR

caroline.chalk@caa.co.uk

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

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner at:-

Information Commissioner's Office
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF
www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx

If you wish to request further information from the CAA, please use the form on the CAA website at <http://www.caa.co.uk/application.aspx?catid=286&pagetype=65&appid=24>.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Stevens'.

Mark Stevens
External Response 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.