

[REDACTED]

Date: 10 September 2025
Reference: F0007547

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request of 18 August 2025, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). For reference your original enquiry was as follows:

I would like to request the following information [Information on Rotary wing aircraft (Helicopters) flying over Salfords and Earlswood, Surrey for the month of July 2025]:

- 1. Detailed flight data, including aircraft type, registration number, airline/operator, and actual departure and arrival times.*
- 2. The filed flight plan, including the route and waypoints.*
- 3. Any safety and incident reports related to the aircraft.*
- 4. Environmental data such as noise levels and emissions, if available.*
- 5. Records of any regulatory compliance checks or enforcement actions taken against the airline or aircraft.*
- 6. Records of any complaints or inquiries received about this flight and the actions taken by the CAA.*

Specifically I am interested in ;

- The flying height of these helicopters within a 5 mile radius of Redhill aerodrome, specifically between the A23 and the London to Brighton Railway line.*
- Risk Assessment for flying low over built up areas for the area defined in the request.*
- Date in question July 2025*
- I am particularly interested in the Police flights and the Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance*

Your request has been considered in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I can confirm that following a review of held information it has been reasonably determined that the CAA holds no information within scope of the above request.

It is noted that the above request is similar in nature to a previous request (given reference F0007498).

Both enquiries relate to similar information with respect to different underlining parameters: F0007498 related to specific flights (Flight HLE 160 & HLE212) whilst F0007547 relates to a specific geographical location (Salfords and Earlswood, Surrey).

[REDACTED]

In both instances, and as explained in F0007498, the CAA holds no information within scope of the requests.

The CAA's conclusions that no information is held should and cannot be taken as confirmation that no activity occurred over the locations mentioned within the time-period. Rather following a review of held CAA information it has been reasonably determined that no information is held by the CAA as it is not within our remit to hold this level of granular information.

It may help your understanding if I set out here the UK CAA's remit with respect to the airspace.

The CAA is not directly involved in the provision of Air Traffic Control (ATC) services, nor do we monitor or maintain records of individual aircraft movements or flight paths. This responsibility lies with the relevant licensed ATC service provider.

In the case of Salford, the airspace is controlled from the surface upwards, forming part of the Gatwick Control Zone (CTR). Aircraft operating in this area are directed by ATC and require clearance to enter and transit the airspace.

By contrast, Earlswood lies within uncontrolled airspace (Class G) up to 1,500 feet, where aircraft may operate autonomously under visual flight rules (VFR). Above this altitude, the airspace becomes controlled, forming part of the Gatwick Control Area (CTA), where ATC services apply.

Noting the above, you may wish to contact NATS Swanwick, the ATC provider responsible for this region, as they may be better placed to assist with your request. As a separate and unique organisation I am unsure as to what information they would hold or be in a position to release to you.

The CAA does not hold, receive, or maintain detailed information regarding specific aircraft operations in these locations and is therefore unable to provide further details.

Helicopter operations in the UK

Helicopter operations within the UK must comply with a variety of regulations and requirements dependant on the type of operations being conducted. UK regulations set out requirements for operators, both aerodrome and aircraft, to mitigate risks and ensure operations are conducted as safely as possible. One of the key requirements of the CAA as a regulator is to ensure these regulations are complied with.

Whether an operator chooses to fly on a particular day is a decision it will make having considered safety, compliance with the regulations and any other applicable requirements associated with the operation.

Safety and Risk to Third Parties

Under UK aviation law, specifically Assimilated Regulation (EU) No 923/2012 (commonly referred to as the Rules of the Air), aircraft must not be operated in a manner that would endanger individuals on the ground, even in the event of an engine failure. This principle is a cornerstone of aviation safety.

However, it is important to understand that this requirement is applied within the framework of established safety margins, aircraft performance capabilities, and full regulatory compliance. As such, helicopter operations over populated areas are not deemed unsafe, provided they are conducted in accordance with the relevant legal and operational standards.

Reporting to the UK CAA and the release of Safety Reports

Under legislation set out in UK (EC) 376/2014, UK operators are required to submit mandatory occurrence reports (MORs) to the UK CAA as specified in IR2015/2018. In addition to MORs, any occurrence that individuals feel could have an impact on aviation safety should be reported, this will ensure that we always review and learn from events. For the purposes of maintaining a 'Just Culture' approach to regulation, these occurrence reports are confidential and can only be disclosed (including any information extracted from a report) where necessary for the sole purpose of improving aviation safety.

If you consider that you require information potentially held within MOR data for the purpose of maintaining or improving aviation safety, you are able to make an application to the CAA on that basis using the form at the following link:

CA70Issue1.fm

Alternatively, the SRG1604 form, which is aimed at industry, (including aviation professionals) and is released on a subscription basis, is available at the following link:

SRG1604: Application for Monthly MOR Listings | UK Civil Aviation Authority

Avoidance of Populated Areas

The British Helicopter Association's (BHA) guidance to avoid populated areas "if possible" is advisory rather than mandatory. While pilots are encouraged to minimise overflight of residential areas, operational needs may limit the extent to which this can be achieved. Nonetheless, the guidance highlights the importance of minimising environmental impact, and operators are encouraged to follow these recommendations wherever operationally practicable.

Flight Logs

The CAA does not monitor all individual aircraft movements which occur within the UK and is not directly involved in the provision of air traffic control services. An aircraft can operate in class G airspace without talking to air traffic control and without having to file a flight plan, thus making it extremely difficult to identify a single aircraft operating within that airspace.

Aircraft Noise

Aircraft noise is not a statutory nuisance in the UK and it is not covered by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 or the Noise Act 1996. The Civil Aviation Authority does not have the legal power to prevent aircraft flying over a particular location or at a particular time for environmental reasons (except when considering proposals to establish new or amend existing Controlled Airspace). Neither local authorities nor the CAA therefore have legal powers to take enforcement action on matters of aircraft noise for environmental reasons.

Information about the CAA's role regarding aircraft noise can be found here:
<https://www.caa.co.uk/consumers/environment/noise/caa-noise-advisory-functions/>.

Outside the scope of FOI

Please note the above is an FOI based response only. I should like to confirm that as you have raised safety concerns these have been past to the relevant CAA Team; someone from that team maybe in contact with you to further discuss these matters.

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:-

FOI.Requests@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 out below. A request for an internal review should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under Section 50 of the FOIA 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
<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

If you wish to request further information from the CAA, please use the form on the CAA website at FOI - Freedom of Information (caa.co.uk).

Yours sincerely
Communications & Engagement Team
Information Rights Specialist
Civil Aviation Authority



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At the CAA we respect agile working so, while it suits me to send this now, I do not expect a response or action outside of your own working hours.

Please consider our environment. Think before printing.

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.
- 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 when necessary consultation with the CAA Legal Department;
- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and if necessary 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.
- An internal review cannot address issues outside of the scope of the original request.
- You, as the applicant, may raise concerns as to why you think the CAA (and any exemptions relied upon) were incorrect in our application of the terms of the FOIA.

- The internal review mechanism should not be used to raise additional further requests for information; this should be done by way of another first stage information request.