UK Civil Aviation Authority

Consultation: Proposed Categories of Heliport for Certification and Safety Management Systems

CAP 3199B

Published by the Civil Aviation Authority 2026

Civil Aviation Authority
Aviation House
Beehive Ring Road
Crawley
West Sussex
RH6 0YR

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First published November 2026

Enquiries regarding the content of this publication should be addressed to: heliport.policy@caa.co.uk

The latest version of this document is available in electronic format at: www.caa.co.uk/CAP3199B

Contents

Contents 3
Executive summary 4
Introduction 5
Context 5
Our objectives 5
The regulatory framework 6
How to respond 6
Current Definitions 7
Proposed Definitions 7
Heliport Categories 8
CAA Proposal 8
Defining Complexity 8
Changing Category 9
Significant Daily Movements 9
Standards For Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting Service (RFFS) 9
Congested Areas & Organised/Open-Air Assemblies 10
Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS) 11
Ground Handling 12
Scheme of Charges 13
Annex A: Summary of Consultation Questions 14
Annex B: Heliport Complexity Mechanism Questions & Rationale 15

Executive summary

The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is seeking views on proposed definitions that form part of anticipated changes to the regulation and oversight of heliports. This consultation represents a further step in the development of a revised regulatory framework and follows the consultation publication of CAP 3199: Policy Framework for Heliport Certification and Safety Management Systems in December 2025, and the subsequent consultation response document, CAP 3199A, published in March 2026.

The consultation aims to ensure that the proposed definitions are clear, proportionate, and supportive of effective and consistent regulation. Stakeholders are invited to submit responses by January 11th 2027. Following the close of the consultation, the CAA will consider all representations received and publish its final conclusions in a Consultation Response Document.

Depending on the passage and final form of the Civil Aviation Bill, these changes may be progressed using powers conferred on the CAA by that legislation, or through a Statutory Instrument facilitated by the Department of Transport. CAA anticipates that additional consultation will be required, to obtain stakeholder feedback on proposed text including, Alternate Means of Compliance and Guidance Material.

Introduction

Context

Helicopter operations in the UK play a vital role in transport, emergency services, offshore activities, and access to remote areas. However, heliports of all types operate to a differing regulatory framework than fixed-wing aerodromes, despite often being in urban areas or near public infrastructure.

Following ICAO amendments to Annex 14 Volume II, and other safety reviews, the CAA proposes a new regulatory framework for heliports. This framework will introduce certification and SMS requirements, consider safeguarding options, and enable advanced operational capabilities whilst ensuring compliance to ICAO Annex 14 Volume II Ed 5 Amd 10.

The proposed changes will also support the integration of future vertical flight technologies and ensure consistency across crewed Helicopter and Powered-Lift operations.

This consultation forms part of the ongoing development of the CAA's future framework for heliport certification and Safety Management Systems (SMS). It builds upon the policy proposals consulted on in CAP 3199: Policy Framework for Heliport Certification and Safety Management Systems and the conclusions set out in CAP 3199A. Through that work, stakeholders provided feedback on the proposed approach to heliport certification, SMS requirements, and proportionate regulatory oversight. The definitions proposed in this consultation are intended to support the consistent implementation of that framework and future legislative and guidance material. The CAA welcomes views on the clarity, applicability, and proportionality of the proposed definitions, including any operational or implementation considerations.

Our objectives

The CAA intends the implementation of the proposed regulatory framework and operational systems necessary to support heliport certification to be implemented over a two-year transition period. This includes applicability for carrying fare paying passengers or cargo, emergency services, high intensity operations and other helicopter operation types. The CAA expects other forms of innovative aviation to emerge, including alternate power sources, and automation assisted operations. The CAA also recognises the emerging requirement for remotely piloted or fully autonomous aircraft although these are not the focus of the current consultation which is intended for crewed helicopter and powered-lift aircraft types. The framework is intended to be appropriate to allow such innovation for when further technology specific guidance can be provided and may be adjusted in future to encompass unmanned aircraft types.

The CAA’s primary objective is safety – specifically, to ensure public and passenger safety through establishing regulations that allow safe flights and safe integration within the wider aviation ecosystem.

The regulatory framework

The regulatory frameworks that are being consulted on within this document are:

- Air Navigation Order 2016 (as amended)
- UK Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 – i.e. the Basic Regulation
- UK Regulation (EU) 965/2012 – i.e. the Air Operations Regulation
- UK Regulation (EU) No 139/2014 – i.e. the Aerodromes Regulation

The primary Civil Aviation Publication (CAP) that will be affected by this consultation is:

- CAP168 Licensing of Aerodromes

Any changes to these regulations and the CAP will need to be coordinated with other interdependent rulemaking tasks and consultations.

In addition, our proposals have been informed by industry engagement conducted through stakeholder working groups in place for Flight Operations, Heliports, and Aerodrome Operators.

Additional engagement has occurred with stakeholders from the eVTOL sector, including future infrastructure providers. Our research and policy development has been conducted in tandem with the research and development of CAP3267 Legislation for the new types of Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) aircraft.

How to respond

The CAA is seeking feedback from both the public and stakeholders across the heliport sector. This includes, but is not limited to, heliport operators, helicopter operators, pilots, aerodrome operators, ground handling service providers, air navigation service providers, and academics.

Responses must be provided by January 11th 2027. Responses should be provided on Citizen Space, using the link provided on the CAA website.

Following the close of the consultation period, the CAA will consider all consultation responses and publish our final decisions in a Consultation Response Document. We expect that further consultation may be required to gain further feedback on proposed changes to some relevant text such as guidance material. Depending on the passage and final form of the Civil Aviation Bill, these changes may be progressed using powers conferred on the CAA by that legislation, or through a Statutory Instrument facilitated by the Department of Transport.

Current Definitions

All definitions exist in either current ICAO, ANO or CAA documentation.

- **Heliport**: ICAO Annex 14 Volume II defines this as “an aerodrome or a defined area on a structure intended to be used wholly or in part for the arrival, departure and surface movement of helicopters.”
- **Congested Area**: The Air Navigation Order 2016 defines this as “any area which is substantially used for residential, commercial or recreational purposes”.
- **Safety Management System (SMS)**: ICAO Annex 19 defines this as “A systematic approach to managing safety, including organisational structures, accountabilities, policies, and procedures.
- **Flight Restriction Zone (FRZ)**: Explained within the Air Navigation Order 2016 and defined on the CAA website: An area around an airport, airfield, heliport or spaceport where you cannot fly a drone or model aircraft without permission.
- **Helicopter**: ICAO Annex 6 Part III defines as “A heavier-than-air aircraft supported in flight chiefly by the reactions of the air on one or more power-driven rotors on substantially vertical axes.”
- **Powered-Lift:** CAA CAP3267C defines this as aircraft “capable of take-off and landing using only ‘engine’ thrust, and are capable of wing-borne flight”
- **Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS):** UK Regulation (EU) 139/2014 “define the limits to which objects may project into the airspace. Each surface is related to one or more phases of a flight and provides protection to aircraft during that phase.”.

Proposed Definitions

- **Heliport Certification**: A CAA process by which a heliport is assessed and approved to meet regulatory standards, including infrastructure, safety procedures, and operational oversight.
- **Heliport**: The CAA proposes amending the definition of heliport to include all VTOL capable type aircraft. *“A heliport is an aerodrome or a defined area on a structure intended to be used wholly or in part for the arrival, departure and surface movement of aircraft that are capable of Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL)”* Note: A heliport is the base class from which sub-types inherit their initial requirements.
- **Vertiport:** The CAA is considering this definition and continues to assess all relevant factors, including the benefits of establishing a distinct regulatory subset, in line with international precedent. At present the CAA does not intend to introduce the term Vertiport into the regulatory ruleset, but is assessing factors such as:
  - Key physical characteristic changes from heliports

- Potential differences in the type of aircraft operation, such as autonomy or digitally enforced trajectory based operations
- Key critical aircraft operational differences that necessitate a distinct ruleset

The CAA will ensure where possible to annotate across regulatory documents that Powered Lift and other similar types of novel aircraft may utilise the heliport ruleset. Should key differentiators be determined, the CAA will further amend to publish vertiport requirements as a subset of the heliport regulatory system.

Heliport Categories

CAA Proposal

We have proposed, in response to the heliport certification requirement described in CAP3199 Policy Framework for Heliport Certification and Safety Management Systems, to utilise four tiers of regulatory framework:

- **Licensed or Certificated Aerodrome:** A heliport contained within an aerodrome and regulated under the aerodrome's licence or certificate. An existing aerodrome may elect to move its regulatory boundaries to incorporate a heliport that is not currently included in the aerodrome licence or certificate, or they may treat the heliport as a separate entity, in which case the heliport falls under one of the categories below.
- **Certified Heliport:** A heliport of sufficient complexity and risk to require a heliport certificate. This will have an audit schedule and be subject to a proportionate ruleset for the heliport type.
- **Declared Heliport:** A smaller, less complex heliport or national infrastructure heliport where the heliport operator declares compliance to regulations on a scheduled basis. The heliport is subject to audit at any time but may not be on an audit schedule.
- **Unlicensed:** Subject only to Flight Operations Regulation. Best practice should be followed where practicable.

Defining Complexity

To support the consistent determination of heliport complexity, thereby determining the certification category, the CAA proposes the introduction of a Heliport Complexity Mechanism. The mechanism will comprise a defined set of assessment questions, each assigned a weighting reflecting the relative complexity and challenge associated with safely and consistently delivering the functions undertaken by a heliport operator. These questions will address key operational and infrastructure characteristics of a heliport.

It is proposed that a series of Critical Assessment Questions will precede the core mechanism and, where appropriate, determine whether a heliport should be categorised as Certified or Declared. Heliports not captured by these initial questions will be required to complete the Heliport Complexity Mechanism in full and will receive a weighted complexity allocation based on their responses.

A complete list of questions proposed are laid out in Annex B of this document.

Changing Category

Changes to a heliport's operation may result in variations to its complexity score, which may in turn lead to a change of category. Where operational changes lead to a change in response to any of the questions set out in Annex B, this will trigger a reassessment against the heliport complexity matrix to ensure continued alignment with the appropriate classification. The CAA proposes to retain discretion to maintain an existing complexity rating where changes would otherwise place a heliport into a higher category; however, this would be considered on a case-by-case basis and would not be guaranteed.

***Question 1**: On a scale of 1 (low) – 5 (high) please rate our proposal regarding how we calculate complexity? Please explain your answer.*

Significant Daily Movements

As part of the previous CAP 3199 consultation, the CAA proposed that heliports with *significant daily movements* will be required to be certified. Respondents to that consultation were clear that the term *significant daily movements* must be defined unambiguously, in order to avoid subjective interpretation and ensure consistent application.

For the purposes of this mechanism, an aircraft movement is defined as either a single take-off or a single landing, with each event counted separately. Based on industry data, the CAA proposes that any heliport handling **3,000 movements or more per annum** be classified as having significant daily movements. It is also proposed that heliports handling **500 movements or more on any single day** will be similarly classified as having significant daily movements.

Should a one-off event be planned where the heliport is to be used, in the interests of national security or diplomacy, with prior permission from CAA, and where appropriate safety mitigations have been approved, the additional movement numbers may be exempted from the complexity scoring. Likewise, in the condition of a HM Government or Police declared major incident where the heliport is used as a component of the response, these movements may be removed from annual movement number scoring.

***Question 2**: On a scale of 1 (low) – 5 (high) please rate our proposal regarding our rationale for how yearly and daily movements will impact the heliport complexity scoring? Please explain your answer.*

Standards For Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting Service (RFFS)

In line with existing CAA regulations/guidance, RFFS arrangements must be defined within the heliport's Safety Management System (SMS) and kept under regular review to ensure continued effectiveness and suitability.

Heliport operators would be expected to maintain effective liaison with local authority fire and rescue services to ensure that external responders have an appropriate understanding of the heliport's

operational environment, hazards, and constraints. This is of particular importance where heliports are located in elevated or otherwise complex environments. CAA certified and declared heliports would be expected to present their Memorandum of Understanding (or equivalent) with the local emergency services including evidence of emergency planning and emergency exercises to their assigned inspector.

The introduction of alternative aviation fuel systems, including hydrogen and battery technologies, presents additional considerations for an RFFS response, requiring the development of appropriate procedures, equipment, and competencies. The CAA would expect all Certified Heliports to complete a CAP791 compliant submission to the CAA in advance of accepting such aircraft.

Certified Heliports will be required to offer a Helicopter Fire Category aligned service. Further consideration is being given to the use of an occasional higher category for military operations in order to reduce the financial and operational burdens of operating high category heliport RFFS.

The CAA is considering the requirement and application of RFFS requirements at small heliports. It is not expected that Declared Heliports will be required to have a dedicated RFFS service, unless deemed necessary by risk assessment or by criteria of being an elevated heliport.

While the objective is to ensure that required RFFS cover remains proportionate to the scale and nature of the operation, elevated heliports will still be expected to provide a defined level of coverage.

***Question 3**: Do you have any comments about our proposals regarding RFFS?*

Congested Areas & Organised/Open-Air Assemblies

Heliports are frequently located within densely populated environments, including cities, towns and other settlements. With this considered, the CAA believes that additional mitigations should be put in place to protect third parties, and to ensure that the concentration of operations is supported in a risk mitigated manner.

Congested Areas

The CAA considers operations within congested areas to present a higher level of risk to third parties than those conducted outside such areas. It is therefore proposed that the Heliport Complexity Mechanism reflects this increased risk through weighted scoring. The CAA will retain discretion to consider applications for operation within the Unlicensed Heliport category, typically where a Congested Area Approval has been issued by CAA Flight Operations. This approach maintains a broader range of compliance options under Rule 5 of the Rules of the Air Regulations 2015.

Open-Air Assemblies

The CAA considers that heliports situated in the vicinity of an open-air assembly should, by default, be classified within the Certified Heliport category. It is proposed that this criterion will form part of the initial screening questions within the Heliport Complexity Mechanism. Where operations in the vicinity of open-air assemblies are limited solely to Specialised Operations (Part-SPO) or Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (Part-HEMS); or State Operations including Police, Search and Rescue

(SAR), and military flights, the associated complexity score may instead be allocated to the Declared Heliport category.

Where more than one heliport exists within the same vicinity of an open-air assembly, all complexity scoring shall be considered as one heliport entity unless specifically agreed by a CAA inspector.

Rules of the Air Regulation 2015

The CAA is not considering amendments to ROTA 2015 with regards to heliports. The changes to certification categories should provide a wider range of regulatory options to achieve compliance with Rule 5, 2(B). Rule 5 has been added to this document to contextualise the above proposals.

"Landing and taking off within congested areas and near open-air assemblies

Rule 5.

(1) An aircraft must not take off or land within a congested area of any city, town or settlement except
(a) at an aerodrome in accordance with procedures notified by the CAA; or
(b) at a landing site which is not an aerodrome in accordance with the permission of the CAA.

(2) An aircraft must not land or take-off within 1,000 metres of an open-air assembly of more than 1,000 persons except.
(a) at an aerodrome in accordance with procedures notified by the CAA; or
(b) at a landing site which is not an aerodrome in accordance with procedures notified by the CAA and with the written permission of the organiser of the assembly."

***Question 4**: Do you have any comments about heliports in congested areas and in the vicinity of organised/open air assemblies?*

Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS)

New Aerodrome Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS) provisions are expected to become applicable on 21st November 2030, subject to the implementation of the revised ICAO framework within the UK regulatory system. This is expected to address many existing challenges associated with the current OLS framework, where safeguarding requirements can place significant constraints on neighbouring development.

Among the proposed changes is the introduction of curved approach and take-off climb surfaces for all Final Approach and Take-Off Areas (FATOs), reflecting the operational characteristics of helicopter flight and enabling safeguarding arrangements that are more closely aligned with actual flight paths, especially where geographical features are used as primary approach or departure routes. The revised framework is therefore anticipated to support more bespoke safeguarding arrangements that better reflect the operational characteristics, physical constraints, and surrounding environments of individual heliports, rather than relying on a more standardised approach. This will help improve the proportionality and effectiveness of safeguarding measures while continuing to maintain appropriate levels of safety.

The new provisions for OLS will include a wider array of options for heliport operators. As part of the Heliport Certification process it is expected the applicant will design, and justify, an appropriate OLS for their intended operation. This could vary from a traditional runway type OLS to an Obstacle Free Volume concept to allow for a wide range of approach and departure headings.

The concept will be further applied to Declared Heliports as best practice, although consideration will be taken by the CAA on how to further apply OLS criteria to such heliports especially those which are considered critical national infrastructure.

The CAA is also considering the application of performance-based OLS slopes where single type heliports are used to further minimise impact to the locale and to the heliport operator in their safeguarding requirements.

The CAA is considering the application of Flight Restriction Zones alongside the OLS application at a heliport, this will be further consulted upon within future Obstacle Limitation Surfaces publications.

It is also important to recognise that responsibility for aviation safeguarding policy in the United Kingdom rests with the Department for Transport (DfT), which sets the overarching policy framework. While the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) does not hold policy responsibility in this area, it continues to play a critical role in providing technical expertise, developing guidance material, and overseeing the regulatory implementation of safeguarding requirements across the aviation sector. The CAA intends to advocate for the application of OLS and adjacent safeguarding for Certified Heliports and for Heliports that constitute national infrastructure, predominantly those of hospitals in urban areas.

***Question 5**: Do you have any comments regarding our Obstacle Limitation Surface concept?*

Ground Handling

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has undertaken a consultation on the future regulation of Ground Handling Services (GH), as set out in *CAP3183 Ground Handling Regulations Consultation* on our proposal to regulate Ground Handling, which outlined a range of options and proposals for a policy framework.

Ground handling typically encompasses all elements associated with the turnaround of an aircraft, including activities such as passenger handling, baggage processing and refuelling. While these functions are often associated with larger aerodromes, they are equally relevant to other operating environments. Heliports rely on similar ground-based activities to support safe and efficient operations.

CAP3183 Ground Handling Regulations consultation along with our response to the consultation can be further reviewed at www.caa.co.uk/groundhandling.

Respondents emphasised the importance of flexibility and efficiency within any future framework, particularly given the diversity of operators and operational contexts. We consider this especially important in the rotary domain where only a small number of services may be provided by a singular Ground Handling Service Provider.

The proposed Heliport Complexity Matrix will incorporate a series of questions designed to identify the ground handling activities conducted at individual heliports. Responses will be assigned weighted

values, which will then inform the overall classification or tiering of each heliport. A secondary Ground Handling Matrix will be undertaken in line with CAP3183 to assess Ground Handling Oversight requirements, ensuring that regulatory attention is proportionate to the complexity and risk associated with the operations carried out at each site.

The CAA intends for all Certified Heliports to comply with the Ground Handling regulation. All licensed or certificated aerodromes will remain under current oversight proposals in CAP3183.

***Question 6**: Do you have any comments regarding Ground Handling at heliports?*

Scheme of Charges

Stakeholders were invited, as part of the CAP 3199 consultation, to provide views on the anticipated introduction of additional fees for certain heliports. As noted in CAP 3199A, once a defined parameter for the level of oversight has been established through further consultation, a proposal will be submitted to the CAA team responsible for the Scheme of Charges. This team will conduct a cost assessment and incorporate the proposal into the 2027/2028 Scheme of Charges consultation, ahead of its formal publication.

For heliport operators managing multiple sites, such as facilities located at factories, offices, or warehouses, there may be an opportunity to group these heliports under a single charge. This would be determined based on factors such as operational complexity and overall volume.

Annex A: Summary of Consultation Questions

Question 1: ***On a scale of 1 (low) – 5 (high) please rate our proposal regarding how we calculate complexity? Please explain your answer***

Question 2: ***On a scale of 1 (low) – 5 (high) please rate our proposal regarding our rationale for how yearly and daily movements will impact the heliport complexity scoring? Please explain your answer.***

Question 3: ***Do you have any comments about our proposals regarding RFFS?***

Question 4: ***Do you have any comments about heliports in congested areas and in vicinity of organised/open air assemblies?***

Question 5: ***Do you have any comments regarding our Obstacle Limitation Surface concept?***

Question 6: ***Do you have any comments regarding Ground Handling at heliports?***

Annex B: Heliport Complexity Mechanism Questions & Rationale

Critical Assessment Questions

1. **Does the heliport handle over 3000 movements per year?**
   Annual movement totals are a key determinant of operational complexity. Higher volumes of movements necessitate the introduction of additional operational processes to ensure effective oversight and control.

2. **Does the heliport handle 500 or more movements on a single day?**

   It is important to include maximum daily movements within the complexity matrix to ensure busy temporary heliports are not underscored based solely on annual movements. For example, a sporting major event's annual traffic is concentrated into just a few days, creating significantly higher operational complexity and risk than annual movement figures alone would suggest.

3. **Is the heliport located close to an open-air assembly?**
   Operating a heliport close to an open-air assembly (e.g. crowds, events, stadiums) introduces a set of interacting safety, operational, regulatory, and public-acceptability complexities.

4. **Are flights at the heliport limited to Part-SPO, HEMS, Police, SAR and military flights only?**

   The CAA recognises that these operations are conducted by personnel subject to specific approvals, enhanced training, and additional operational requirements, resulting in a higher level of regulatory assurance than that afforded to comparable activities.

5. **Are scheduled passenger flights conducted at the heliport?**

   Scheduled passenger services expose fare-paying members of the public to a foreseeable and repetitive aviation risk. Therefore, whether a heliport is available to scheduled passengers service has a pivotal impact on the Heliport Complexity Mechanism.

Further Questions for Complexity and Category Determination

1. **How many based helicopters are there at the heliport?**
   As the number of helicopters based at a heliport increases, there is a corresponding increase in the level of oversight required by the heliport operator. This growth also heightens the potential for operational conflicts.

2. **What level of ATS is covered by the heliport predominantly?**

   The provision of air traffic services at a heliport contributes to the complexity of the operation. Heliports with an AFIS or ATC air traffic service unit will be subject to annual ANSP oversight.

3. **Does the heliport accept non-based aircraft?**

Allowing non-based helicopters introduces additional risk, particularly where pilots may be unfamiliar with the site. It may also create a greater need for the heliport operator to be present, for example to support refuelling, ground handling, or general site facilitation.

4. **Does the heliport accept multiple AOC operation flights?**
   The introduction of flights operated under multiple Air Operator Certificates (AOCs) increases the complexity of heliport operations by expanding the number of stakeholders affected by operational decisions. In addition, multi-AOC operations can introduce variations in helicopter operating practices, as individual operators may follow different Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These differences can create challenges in maintaining operational consistency, coordination, and oversight, requiring clear governance and effective stakeholder engagement to ensure safe and efficient operations.

5. **Does the heliport accept military aircraft?**
   Military helicopter operations at a civilian heliport introduce additional complexities, including larger aircraft and downwash, the integration of military crews and support staff, and the potential carriage of dangerous goods.

6. **What is the largest helicopter category the heliport will accept?**
   Limiting the size of helicopters accepted can reduce heliport complexity by lowering downwash effects, dimensional constraints, the number of people requiring management during ground operations, and the number of people exposed to risk in the event of an incident.

7. **What operations take place at the heliport? (Select your top five operations)**
   The type of operations conducted at a heliport impacts the level of operational complexity and risk. Activities such as initial flight training present elevated risk, particularly where low-hour pilots operate basic aircraft with limited experience also pose a threat. By contrast, a heliport used exclusively by HEMS or NPAS operations would exhibit reduced operational complexity. This is due to lower movement rates, and minimum training standards. Scheduled Passenger Transport is captured within the preceding Critical Assessment Questions.

8. **Does the heliport require pilot training / in person briefing before operating into or out of the facility?**
   The heliport operator shall therefore be required to ensure that all briefing and training material is regularly reviewed, maintained, and updated to accurately reflect current operational procedures and site characteristics.

9. **What type of RFFS cover does the heliport currently maintain?**
   Heliports that provide a full service experience greater operational complexity, particularly in relation to implementation requirements, ongoing training, and maintaining adequate fire cover to remain operational throughout published operating hours. Sites operating under a DIFF system (such as hospital helicopter landing sites) typically face lower levels of complexity. The lowest level of complexity is generally associated with heliports operating on a “response” basis, where emergency fire cover is most often provided by the local public fire service.

10. What is the highest level of RFFS cover the heliport provides?

The higher the level of Rescue and Fire Fighting Services (RFFS) provided by a heliport, the greater the operational complexity involved. This includes increased requirements for specialist vehicles, staff training, quantities of water and foam carried, and minimum staffing levels. Conversely, heliports with limited or no RFFS provision experience the lowest level of complexity in service delivery.

11. Does the heliport accept future fuels powered aircraft? (i.e. electric / hydrogen)

From an RFFS perspective, future-fuel aircraft fundamentally change heliport emergency response because battery-electric and hydrogen systems introduce thermal runaway, re-ignition, invisible flames, and long-duration incidents that cannot be managed using traditional RFFS concepts. As a result, heliports accepting future-fuel aircraft significantly increase their operational and safety complexity which may require further oversight requirements.

12. Does the heliport provide refuelling?

Adding refuelling to an operation increases workload and complexity. It requires daily and weekly fuel checks, keeping records up to date, and training staff to handle fuel safely. It also means working with third-party organisations on site, such as fuel suppliers and tank maintenance companies, which adds further responsibility for heliport management.

13. Who conducts the refuelling at the heliport?

Allowing multiple organisations to conduct fuelling introduces the risk of inconsistent standards and practices, as well as fragmented fuelling documentation and audit trails. Restricting fuelling activities to heliport operations staff, or a designated ground handling (GH) provider, reduces operational complexity, ensures consistency of standards, and strengthens oversight and accountability.

14. Are Rotors Running Refuels provided at the heliport?

From a heliport operator's perspective, rotors running refuelling increases risk by combining live rotors, fuel handling, personnel activity, and sometimes passenger presence into a single time-critical operation with little margin for error; this elevates the likelihood of injury, fire, human-factor mistakes, and exposes weaknesses in site design, staff competency, emergency response, and third-party oversight, increasing regulatory liability, and reputational risk unless tightly controlled.

15. Are Rotors Running passenger transfers conducted at the heliport?

Permitting passenger transfers while rotors are running, places members of the general public in close proximity to spinning blades, elevated noise levels, and exhaust heat. These transfers often occur in environments characterised by high sensory overload for passengers, combined with significant time pressure and workload for ground staff. Safety relies heavily on manual procedures and the exclusive use of hand signals, which increases operational complexity and heightens the risk of miscommunication during a critical phase of the operation.

16. Who provides ground handling at the heliport?

Permitting multiple ground handling providers at a heliport increases complexity for the operator. Restricting ground handling to a single, clearly accountable provider, such as the heliport's own operations team, provides a more proportionate and effective safety

framework. Risk may be different where only helicopter flight crews, who have the greatest aircraft-specific knowledge, conduct handling activities for their own aircraft.

17. Does the heliport operate an Operational Control Communication (OPC)?

The introduction of an Operational Control Communication (OPC) service at the heliport increases oversight complexity. As this ground-to-aircraft communication is not overseen as an ANSP, the heliport operator must ensure compliance and appropriate staff training themselves.

18. How many staff are employed as part the heliport operation?

Increasing staffing levels at a heliport adds complexity through expanded record keeping obligations, including managing training, competency, and compliance documentation to meet regulatory and audit requirements. It also complicates staff training and shift rostering, as operators must ensure consistent induction and recurrent training while balancing fatigue management, skill mix, working time rules, and operational resilience.

19. Does the heliport feature aviation security between landside and airside?

Heliports that incorporate aviation security measures separating airside and landside areas are typically those supporting commercial air transport operations and therefore already experience increased operational complexity. Ensuring appropriate staff training, maintaining effective security procedures, and managing ongoing equipment maintenance all create a significant additional workload for the operator.

20. Is the heliport permanent or temporary?

Operating a temporary heliport is often more complex in practice than running a permanent one, even though it exists for a shorter time. The complexity arises from uncertainty, compressed timelines, and the need to recreate, with less infrastructure, the same safety outcomes expected at a permanent facility.

21. What type of heliport is it?

Elevated and rooftop heliports are more regulatory complex to operate than ground-level heliports because they depend on building structure, face stricter load, fire, and vibration requirements, and are more exposed to wind, turbulence, and nearby obstacles. Operations are often more restrictive, emergency access and evacuation are harder to manage, and noise and downwash impacts are greater in dense urban settings. Ground-level heliports generally have simpler access, fewer structural constraints, and easier emergency and support operations.

22. Does the heliport have an onsite Part 145 maintenance facility?

The operation of a Part 145 maintenance facility at a heliport will require the operation of maintenance test flights which may present additional risk to the heliport environment.

23. Does the heliport operate in the hours of darkness?

Night operations increase the complexity of heliport operations due to heightened risks from obstacles, reduced visibility, and more demanding ground handling. This is further compounded at heliports with RFFS capabilities, and current policy requires heliports above 3 metres in elevation to obtain permission to operate at night.

24. **If the heliport is available H24, are ATSU/RFFS/GH provisions in place for all movements?**
    A change in service provision can create complexity for operators in terms of what they can reasonably expect when operating to and from the heliport. In addition, such changes introduce further challenges for the heliport operator, as alterations to ATSU, RFFS and/or ground handling provision generate additional requirements for risk assessment, operational procedures, and staff training, all of which must be subject to regular review and updating.

25. **Is the heliport located in a congested area?**
    Operating a heliport in a congested area is complex because helicopter movements must be safely integrated into constrained airspace and obstacle-dense environments while managing high third-party risk and limited operational margins. These challenges are compounded by noise sensitivity, fragile planning permissions, overlapping regulatory controls, and ongoing pressure from urban development, meaning success depends as much on stakeholder and environmental management as on aviation compliance.

26. **What is the closest distance between a manoeuvring helicopter and the public boundary of the heliport?**
    Operating helicopters near a public boundary introduces additional complexity for heliport operators, particularly in managing and mitigating the risks associated with downwash to third parties.

27. **Is the heliport configured or located in a manner that requires all helicopter take-offs and landing to be conducted elsewhere, for example, on a runway within the aerodrome regulatory boundary?**
    Heliports that do not accommodate arrival and departure phases, instead relying on helicopters taxiing to an aerodrome runway, present reduced operational complexity as they involve only taxiing-phase movements.

28. **How many marked pads are available at the heliport?**
    Heliports with multiple marked landing pads can accommodate simultaneous aircraft movements; however, this increased capacity also introduces additional operational complexity. Managing concurrent arrivals and departures heightens the demands on ground handling, coordination, and situational awareness, while also increasing the potential for aircraft conflicts if procedures, markings, or oversight are inadequate.

29. **Is the heliport located within the regulatory boundary of a licensed / certified aerodrome?**
    Heliports situated within the regulatory boundary of an aerodrome will already have been subject to oversight by the Aerodrome Inspectorate. Heliports located outside an aerodrome's regulatory boundary may require new oversight from the CAA.

30. **How many aircraft movements does the aerodrome, in which the regulatory boundary of the heliport sits, handle per year?**
    Integrating a heliport operation into a significantly busy aerodrome presents a number of challenges, including the integration of differing aircraft types, potential impacts on slot allocation, and the need for effective liaison with multiple aerodrome stakeholders. These factors require careful coordination to ensure operational efficiency and safety is maintained.