

27 July 2015
Reference: F0002300

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your request of 27 March 2015, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), in relation to pilots suspended from flying aircraft due to being diagnosed with depression. We subsequently agreed that, although the CAA was not obliged to comply with your request due to the time that it would take to provide the information, because we were collating similar information for our own purposes we would provide you with information once it was available. The data has been reviewed but it is possible that some data errors remain; however, these should not significantly affect the general overview that the data provides.

The data gathered concerns commercial pilots who have declared a diagnosis of a depressive illness, adjustment disorder, anxiety disorder, stress related issues or post-traumatic stress disorder in the last five years. This includes initial applicants and existing licence holders transferring from other national authorities for whom the disorder may have occurred a number of years prior to their initial assessment/declaration. The disorders vary significantly in their level of severity and impact and following declaration the CAA requires detailed reports from medical specialists which include those treating the individual and those advising the CAA.

With the implementation of European regulations (EASA Part MED) in 2012 it became possible for existing aircrew to regain a medical certificate following complete recovery from a depressive illness while still taking certain maintenance medication (which decrease the risk of relapse) if they follow a particular protocol. This has likely lead to more pilots declaring their condition in 2013/14 and receiving appropriate treatment whilst being suspended from flying.

It should also be noted that, compared to pilots declaring conditions in 2014, those from 2010 have had a longer period in which to make a complete recovery and (re)gain certification.

To put the figures in context, there are, on average, around 1800 initial applications and 22,000 renewals or revalidations of medical certificates for commercial pilots each year.

Civil Aviation Authority

Aviation House Gatwick Airport South Gatwick RH6 0YR www.caa.co.uk
Telephone 01293 768512 foi.requests@caa.co.uk

		No.	Certificate Suspended/ Not issued	(Re)gained certificate at future date
2010	Initial Applicant	13	7	5
	Certificate holder	62	58	48
2011	Initial Applicant	17	9	8
	Certificate holder	65	53	43
2012	Initial Applicant	19	10	8
	Certificate holder	58	43	31
2013	Initial Applicant	18	13	9
	Certificate holder	82	65	53
2014	Initial Applicant	25	22	16
	Certificate holder	88	80	55

The processes and requirements for a commercial pilot to gain, and revalidate or renew, a medical certificate can be found on our website at:

<http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=49&pagetype=90&pageid=527>
<http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/2499/20140911CertValidityTable.pdf>

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 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 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
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.