

7 December 2015  
Reference: F0002553

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent request, of 10 November 2015, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

*I would be grateful if you would provide any reports or emails that have been sent to and from the Ministry of Defence about operational safety and the safety of residents living near RAF Northolt since 2011.*

Our response:

Having considered your request in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), we are able to provide the information below.

As you are aware, the regulation of civil operations at RAF Northolt has recently been subject to judicial review, with judgement handed down on 23 January 2015.

The CAA holds a considerable volume of correspondence related to this subject, not only with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), but also with the Military Aviation Authority, the Department for Transport, the parties that applied for the judicial review, particularly Biggin Hill Airport Ltd, and external legal advisers, as well as internal correspondence. This includes correspondence both pre-dating the application for judicial review, and subsequent to the judgement being handed down.

We are not aware of any correspondence specifically regarding the safety of residents living near Northolt.

We have carefully considered the other part of your request, for reports and emails about operational safety, but have concluded that the broad nature of the term 'operational safety' means that it is impossible for us to deal with it. The vast majority of the correspondence we hold on the subject relates in some way to operational safety. It would take a considerable amount of time to identify the relevant correspondence and isolate that between the CAA and the MoD.

Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), we are not obliged to comply with a request for information if the cost of complying with the request would exceed £450,

**Civil Aviation Authority**

Aviation House Gatwick Airport South Gatwick RH6 0YR. [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)

Telephone: 01293 768512. [foi.requests@caa.co.uk](mailto:foi.requests@caa.co.uk)

and we have estimated that this cost limit would be exceeded in this case. While not relevant to considering the cost of complying with your request for the purposes of Section 12, some of the correspondence will also be legally privileged.

If you are able to narrow the scope of your request so that that it is more specific we would be happy to consider a revised request. There is a considerable amount of information on this subject already in the public domain which may help you to narrow your request:

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/increase\\_in\\_civilian\\_movements\\_a](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/increase_in_civilian_movements_a) includes an assessment of RAF Northolt against International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards carried out by CAA International in 2009. The 2011 'Asset Review of RAF Northolt' report produced by Ernst & Young referred to was subsequently disclosed by the MoD at

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/project\\_noah\\_asset\\_review\\_of\\_raf#incoming-705183](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/project_noah_asset_review_of_raf#incoming-705183).

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/regulation\\_of\\_policy\\_for\\_northol#incoming-424886](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/regulation_of_policy_for_northol#incoming-424886) includes further information relating to Northolt.

<http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/1357/F0002539ReplyLetter.pdf> includes the material that we used to establish a reply to Biggin Hill airport of 4 November 2015 in which we stated that *we do not see a need to impose additional conditions on civil aircraft operators at this time*.

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](mailto: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](http://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'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, looped initial 'M'.

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.

**Freedom of Information Act : Section 12**

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

(2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

(3) In subsections (1) and (2) "the appropriate limit" means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

(4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority-

(a) by one person, or

(b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign,

the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.

(5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.