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23 February 2018
Reference: F0003574

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing in respect of your recent request of 25 January 2018, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Your request has been considered in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your request and our response:

- 1. In simple terms, what ATC restrictions were imposed upon British Airways at or before 09:25 on 10 December 2017 giving rise to the cancellation of flight BA 1489.**

NATS placed a flow restriction at London Heathrow on all flights at 0700hrs of 36 flights per hour due to weather conditions. This was then reduced to 26 flights per hour at 0800hrs and to 20 per hour at 1300hrs. This general restriction remained until the end of the day.

- 2. Can you confirm that no similar restriction was imposed on, for example Lufthansa or American Airlines? In other words, was the flow rate of zero imposed on BA arrivals imposed on any other airlines on the day at 16:28 hours or at all?**

Since our last response, we have received further information about the additional restriction on BA flights. The 4:28 zero flow rate restriction on all BA arrivals was imposed by Heathrow Tower Control (run by NATS subsidiary NSL) in response to airfield safety concerns due to severe congestion on the airfield caused by the number of BA flights waiting for stands. This restriction was lifted at 2200hrs. It was only put on BA flights as other airlines did not have the same problems with stand availability.

- 3. Can you confirm whether at any time on 10 December 2017 London Heathrow closed its runways for all arrivals and landings, for all airlines, and if so, for what period of time?**

Please refer to our answer in question 2, above.

- 4. Can you assist me in finding out what British Airway's policy is with regard to de-icing of aircraft at London Heathrow might be?**

BA's de-icing policy is the same as other international airlines and complies with the Boeing and Airbus requirements. The wing and tail plane must be clean of all contaminants and some limited contamination is allowed on the fuselage. If there is precipitation giving rise to ice/snow accumulations, aircraft are de-iced to a clean condition with a Type 1 fluid and then anti-icing (Type II or IV) fluid is applied, which will protect the aircraft against further accumulations for a period dependant on the temperature, type and intensity of precipitation (the holdover time). This de/anti-icing is an extra step in the departure process so inevitably slows down the departure rate if there is precipitation, as it must be carried out after the aircraft is ready to depart. Also, the holdover time can be very limiting in certain types of precipitation, and if exceeded prior to take-off the aircraft has to return to be de-iced and anti-iced again.

- 5. At what point in time and on what day was the "Zero flow rate" for British Airways arrivals at London Heathrow Airport relaxed by ATC?**

Please refer to our answer in question 2, above.

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
<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

If you wish to request further information from the CAA, please use the form on the CAA website at <http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/modalapplication.aspx?appid=24>.

Yours sincerely

Rihanne Stephen
Information Rights Officer

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.