

YOUR LONDON AIRPORT

Gatwick

POLICY ON HANDLING AIRCRAFT NOISE COMPLAINTS

Introduction

This Policy forms part of a series of institutional arrangements which have been put in place to address noise from aircraft. The Aviation Policy Framework (APF) describes the Government's overall objectives for aviation and the policies used to achieve those objectives. Chapter 3 of the APF sets out the Government's policy on noise and other local environmental impacts.

The Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee (GATCOM) (<http://www.gatcom.org.uk/>) provides the mechanism for consultation on any matter concerning the management or administration of the airport which affects the interests of users of the airport, local authorities and any organisation representing the interests of local people in accordance with the Airport's obligations under Section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982.

The independently chaired Noise Management Board (NMB) (<http://www.gatwickairport.com/business-community/aircraft-noise-airspace/noise-management-board/>) was established as a result of the Gatwick Airport Independent Arrivals Review to oversee joint strategies to deal with noise around the airport. The purpose of the NMB is to develop, agree, oversee and maintain a co-ordinated noise management vision and supporting strategies for Gatwick Airport on behalf of stakeholder organisations with the aim of reducing the impact of noise on the local community.

This 'Policy on Handling Aircraft Noise Complaints' has been revised in light of feedback received from local residents, GATCOM and from the Independent Arrivals Review.

Policy Objectives:

- The acknowledgement and timely response of complaints.
- The provision of sufficient information to understand the source of the issue, and where appropriate, what action has been taken.
- The consistent recording of all complaint data.
- The establishment and maintenance of a complete record of complaints received, transparent to the community, regulator and other stakeholders.
- The utilisation of a digital platform to facilitate these objectives.

Summary

- **The principle and main mechanism for registering noise complaints at Gatwick is through the online Casper system.**
- **We will register, acknowledge and investigate all complaints received that have a full name, email address (where available) and postal address.** All names, email addresses and postal addresses will be treated as strictly confidential and not used for any purpose other than registering complaints.
- **To the extent we can, we will provide individuals with relevant information to help with understanding the issue raised.** We believe that the fairest and most beneficial method for dealing with enquiries from all residents is to be clear and open about existing noise policies, the measures used to control noise and how these together affect how the Airport operates.
- **We will investigate the cause of complaints arising from specific causes**, such as track keeping, but we will not repeatedly supply the same or similar information, or substantial amounts of data.
- **The Casper complaint database will provide aggregate data that is accessible to third parties.**
- **We will continue to monitor our overall performance**, for example, with respect to track keeping and Continuous Descent Approaches. This monitoring is carried out continuously and is not dependent upon receipt of complaints.

- **We will use data to continue to work proactively with airlines and air traffic service providers to improve noise and track keeping performance at the Airport.**
- **We will continue to publish regular updates on noise and aircraft performance, together with other relevant information.**

Receiving Complaints

In order to deliver the intent of this policy and maintain the integrity of the complaints process and data, in line with the feedback received from local residents, GATCOM and from the Independent Arrivals Review, **ALL** complaints regarding aircraft noise made to the Airport should be submitted via our dedicated complaints web portal (Casper) – <http://noiselab.casper.aero/lgw>.

To ensure that the complaints system is accessible to all, including those complainants who do not have access to the internet, complaints can be made by letter to our freepost address given at the end of this document. Complaints received by post will be entered into the Casper system by our staff, to maintain a single, uniform and transparent record of all complaints. Freepost complaints will be investigated and responded to in the same way as a complaint made through Casper. The only exception to this is for “persistent complainants”, as set out below. Freepost complaints made by persistent complainants will not be entered onto Casper, investigated or responded to, but will be counted and contribute to our overall complaints data which is reported on, as described below.

We will register, acknowledge and, where appropriate, investigate all complaints received.

For statistical purposes, it is essential that we are provided with a full name, valid email address (where available) and postal address and the reason for the complaint, otherwise the complaint cannot be logged.

Names, email addresses and postal addresses given will not be made public or used for any purpose other than registering complaint details, and to allow direct response to the complainant. Complaint reports by postal code area are recorded through Casper and published. We can only provide information on aircraft that operate to and from Gatwick Airport.

Noise Management Board (NMB) and Persistent Complaints

In order to ensure that relevant themes, topics and specific issues raised by persistent complainants are captured GAL will routinely provide packets of anonymised correspondence to the NMB Secretariat for consideration at each NMB. The objective is to permit NMB members to consider whether any constructive suggestions can be identified from the correspondence to help inform and guide NMB work. Any such issues considered by the NMB will be reported in the Minutes of NMB meetings, together with any actions that the NMB decides might be appropriate. The NMB will not deal with individual complaints.

Specific Enquiries

Complaints regarding specific flights must be individually registered. For complaints regarding specific departures we will, in line with this policy, supply details of the flight which is the subject of the complaint, such as airline, flight number and height. Where complaints are registered regarding a number of flights, we will endeavour to provide general information which will add to an individual’s understanding of the situation.

In the case of arriving aircraft, there is no requirement for track keeping as is the case with departing aircraft, however we will supply information to help explain the reasons for an unusual event, for example, a change to a normal operating pattern. Where it is deemed to help understand the noise relating to a particular area, we will supply a typical days’ tracks of aircraft overflight and background information relating to operations.

Provision of Information

We provide a full and comprehensive information service and our policy is to make available as much detail about aircraft operations as is reasonably practical, (for example, noise limits, runway direction and aircraft heights within Noise Preferential Routes). All this information is publicly accessible through Casper and Gatwick Airport’s Noise Website - <http://gatwickairport.com/business-community/aircraft-noise-airspace/>.

Each request for information over and above that publicly provided through Casper or given to answer the individual complaint will be considered on its merits, based on the particular circumstances of the request. We will take into account the amount of information that has already been made available, the resources required to process the information asked, and whether the information seems likely to enhance further understanding. We may however decline to undertake extensive data gathering exercises in support of individual complaints.

General Enquiries

In response to general complaints through Casper we will supply information which explains aircraft routes and procedures, which includes maps showing typical tracks relating to individual postcodes, so as to be transparent and accurate about the possible impacts of aircraft operations for those living near Gatwick Airport.

The Gatwick Airport Noise Website – <http://gatwickairport.com/business-community/aircraft-noise-airspace/> provides detailed information on aircraft activity and how aviation may impact local communities, as well as hosting the dedicated complaints handling portal detailed above.

Persistent Complainants

Where we have repeatedly explained the policies and noise measures which affect a complainant's postcode area and previously supplied sufficient information to the extent that we are unable to further enhance understanding, we will notify the complainant of our intention only to register - rather than to respond to – all future complaints.

Monitoring of Noise Abatement Procedures & Complaints

Monitoring of noise abatement procedures (for example, aircraft track keeping and Continuous Descent Approach), is part of our ongoing commitment to effective noise management around the airport and is not carried out in response to complaints received. Where there appears to be unusual activity we proactively investigate and work with operators to understand any issues. We regularly publish information on the results of monitoring on our website and supply the data to GATCOM.

Reporting

Numbers and summary details of complaints, as well as the number of noise infringements, Continuous Descent Approach performance and track keeping performance will be reported quarterly at the GATCOM and the Noise and Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NaTMAG) and subsequently published online. Generic locations of the sources of complaints are also publicly available through Casper.

Abusive Complaints

Gatwick Airport Ltd will not respond to any complaints made that are of an abusive or threatening nature or containing obscene language. Any such complaints may be referred to the Police for investigation.

Assurance

The Secretary of State for Transport has taken direct responsibility for noise control at Gatwick under the Civil Aviation Act 1982. The Department for Transport (DfT) liaises closely with Gatwick Airport Ltd with respect to both the effects of airspace policy on areas around the airport and of emerging trends and issues in airspace management. Consideration and enactment of changed to airspace policy rests with the DfT.

Policy Review

We will keep this policy under periodic review.

Freepost Address

Freepost GATWICK AIRPORT FLIGHT PERFORMANCE TEAM
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