

Policy on handling aircraft noise complaints

Receiving Complaints

We will register and investigate all complaints received, even where little detailed information is provided. However, for recording purposes, it is essential that we are provided with a full name and Postal Address. The names and addresses recorded are for our records only and will not be made public or used for any purpose other than registering complaint details in compliance with GDPR. We can only provide information on aircraft that operate from Stansted Airport. It is Stansted Airport Ltd (STAL) policy not to respond to abusive complaints or in any case where there is deemed to be an abuse of the service.

Provision of Information

We aim to provide a full and comprehensive information service and our policy is to provide as much detail as is reasonably practical, (e.g. noise limits, runway direction, aircraft heights within Noise Preferential Routes (NPR's), weather), with consideration to the number of enquiries we receive and whether there are benefits for the complainant.

Each request for information will be considered on its merits. Whilst wishing to be as helpful as possible, we have to consider the resources available to us, to ensure that all callers are treated fairly. We will consider the amount of information previously supplied, as to whether any further information would serve to enhance the complainant's understanding.

Information available to us is generally of a technical nature and can require detailed explanation in order that this can be readily understood by a member of the public. Past experience would suggest that the provision of extensive information is not always helpful and can sometimes lead to misunderstanding. In some cases, misinterpretation of data and procedures can raise unrealistic expectations that the airport can implement prompt changes to flight paths. The provision of extensive data in individual cases can also have resource implications for STAL. This could impact on our ability to monitor performance, as required by the DfT, and undertake key strategic studies and planning designed to bring about improvements in the noise climate. Consequently, we will not undertake extensive data gathering exercises in individual cases.

General Enquiries

Typically, we offer to supply information which explains the relevant procedures and includes maps showing typical days tracks which relate to the complainant's postcode area. Information is also available on Stansted Airport's website including access to our Webtrak service. This shows the tracks for aircraft operating in and out of Stansted Airport and includes information such as flight number and height of the aircraft.

Helicopter Complaints

Helicopters are permitted to land and take-off from London Stansted Airport. On average, we would expect around 6 helicopter movements each day. In addition to these, there may be Police, Military, medical emergency or aerial surveying helicopters (e.g. for power line or pipeline surveys) that need to fly within the airspace in and around London Stansted airport. Also, on occasions, emergency and compassionate helicopter flights may need to land at, and depart from, the airport.

Under normal circumstances, all helicopter movements have to adhere to certain height rules when flying. For example, a helicopter must not be flown closer than 500 feet to any person, vehicle, vessel or structure. Also, when flying over a city, town or settlement, it must not fly below a height of 1,000 feet above the highest fixed obstacle within a 600 metre horizontal radius of the helicopter.

Complaints for helicopter movements can also be directed to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) or the Ministry of Defence (MOD) as follows:

CAA

Aviation Related Environmental Enquiries
Directorate of Airspace Policy
K6 G7, CAA House
45-59 Kingsway
London WC2B 6TE
e-mail: aree@caa.co.uk

MOD

Ministry of Defence
Directorate of Air Staff - Complaints and Enquiries Unit
Zone H, 5th Floor, Main Building
London SW1A 2HB
Tel: 020 7218 6020
Email: lowflying@mod.gov.uk

Complaints about **Essex Police Helicopter** movements should be made by calling:

0300 333 4444.

Hertfordshire Police Helicopter complaints should be made by calling:

0845 3300 222

British Helicopter Advisory Board www.britishhelicopterassociation.org

Abusive Complaints

STAL will not respond to any complaints made that are of an abusive or threatening nature. All such complaints will be immediately handed to the Police for their investigation.

Specific Enquiries

There is a difference between departing and arriving aircraft, since departing aircraft are required to comply with noise limits and to follow Noise Preferential Routes until they reach 3000ft or 4000ft depending on the departure route, whereas there are no noise limits and no set routes for arriving aircraft.

If requested, initially we will supply details of particular flights such as airline, flight number and height. However, one of the prime considerations is the number of flights for which detailed information is requested. If we feel the information requested, or other information we have, will add to a caller's understanding of the situation we are always prepared to help if we can.

If we consider it would be beneficial for a complainant to gain a better understanding of their specific concerns, we will offer an invitation to visit the Airport to better understand the work of the Flight Evaluation Unit (FEU) first hand.

Regular Callers

Where we believe we have explained the policies and noise measures which affect the complainant's postcode area and previously supplied sufficient amounts of data to the extent that we are unable to further enhance understanding, we will notify the complainant of our intention to only register and acknowledge their future complaints. For recording purposes, we consider any complainant who has registered 30 or more complaints in any 1 calendar month, to be recorded that month as a multiple complainant.

Monitoring of Noise Abatement Procedures & Complaints

Monitoring of noise abatement procedures (for example track keeping and CDA) is not carried out in response to complaints but as part of our ongoing commitment to effectively manage the noise climate around the airport. Where there appears to be something unusual occurring, or a trend emerging, we will investigate.

We regularly publish information on the results of monitoring.

Both STAL and the DfT will continue to work towards improving the overall noise climate together with NATS and airlines.

Reporting

Numbers and summary details of complaints will be reported quarterly at the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee (STACC) and the Noise and Track Keeping Working Group (NTKWG), along with Noise Infringements, Continuous Descent Approach performance and Track Keeping performance.

Auditing Procedure

STAL will undertake an internal audit of the complaints handling system annually. Our complaints handling process and reporting forms part of our annual CSR and ISO 14001 auditing.

Service Reporting Targets

We log, investigate and respond to all noise complaints and aim to respond to 90% of enquiries within 8 working days.

Our performance against these targets will be presented to the Noise & Track Keeping Working Group on a quarterly basis.

Summary

- **We will register and investigate all complaints received that have a full Name and Postal Address. All names and addresses will be treated as strictly confidential and not used for any purpose other than registering complaints.**
- **We will provide relevant information to facilitate understanding of the issue, but we will not repeatedly supply the same or similar information or substantial amounts of data.** We feel that the fairest and most beneficial method for dealing with enquiries from all residents is to be clear and open about existing policies, the measures used to control noise and how these together affect how the Airports operate.
- **We will not undertake extensive data gathering exercises in individual cases.** This allows us to concentrate more resource into performance monitoring and any overall studies which have a chance of providing useful information about what, if any, improvements might be possible.
- **We will continue to monitor performance overall, for example track keeping and CDA.** This is carried out continuously and is not dependent on receipt of complaints. Where there appears to be something unusual occurring, we will investigate.
- **We will use this data to continue to work proactively with the airline community to enhance performance at the Airport.**
- **We will continue to regularly publish information on performance.**

Assurance

The Secretary of State for Transport has taken direct responsibility for noise control at Heathrow and Stansted under the Civil Aviation Act 1982. The DfT liaise with MAG and are aware of both the effects of policy over areas around these Airports and of emerging trends and issues. It rests with DfT to consider whether there is any need to consider a change in policy.

In the event of a policy change being considered, the DfT would develop this on a consultative basis, not just involving residents from a particular area, particularly since changes which benefit some residents may increase impacts elsewhere.

Policy Review

We will keep all our policies under review.

Further Information

Further information on Aircraft Noise can be found on the Stansted Airport Website www.stanstedairport.com/noise and via the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee Website www.stacc.info .

If you are not satisfied with the service provided or the response to your complaint, you can contact the Department for Transport:

Aviation Noise Policy
Aviation Environmental Division
Department for Transport
Zone 1/22
Great Minister House
76 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR
aed@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Or contact Uttlesford District Council via email:
environmentalhealth@uttlesford.gov.uk

Contact Details

Web: www.stanstedairport.com/noise
Email: stanstednoiseline@stanstedairport.com

Tel: 0800 243 788