



Department
for Transport

Consultation: Night flight restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted from October 2025

Heathrow Noise and Airspace Community Forum – 20/03/2024





Consultation: Night flight restrictions

- ▶ We have confirmed a night-time noise abatement objective for the next night flight regime:
 - “**To limit and where possible reduce, the adverse effects of aviation noise at night on health and quality of life, while supporting sustainable growth and recognising the importance to the UK of commercial passenger and freight services.**”
- ▶ We intend to measure achievement against this objective by the following metrics:
 - the area of and number of people in the 48dB LAeq 6.5 hour night contour
 - sleep disturbance impacts associated with night flights, assessed using Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) methodologies
 - the average noise of an aircraft (as measured by the average noise Quota Count per aircraft movement over the course of a season)
- ▶ While we do not intend to use a Number Above metric as a measure of success for the next regime, we have committed to producing them in the future. We have included N60 6.5 hour night contours within the data presented in **Annex F** of the consultation.



Consultation: Night flight restrictions

- ▶ While we await evidence from the Aviation Night Noise Effects study and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey, we have proposed a bridging night flight regime of 3 years – covering October 2025 to October 2028.
- ▶ We have proposed to keep movement limits and noise quota limits in the Night Quota Period (23:30 – 06:00) the same for the next regime at Heathrow.
- ▶ Proposed structure of the night flight regime, October 2025-2028:

Airport	Season	Movement Limit	Noise Quota Limit
Heathrow	Winter	2,550	2,415
	Summer	3,250	2,735
Gatwick	Winter	3,250	1,785
	Summer	11,200	5,150
Stansted	Winter	5,600	3,310
	Summer	8,100	4,650



Updated guidance on night flight dispensations

- ▶ We have added a requirement for the noise-designated airports to write a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport, within one month of a season ending, setting out:
 - ▶ Detail on dispensations
 - ▶ Why those dispensations have been approved
 - ▶ Why they have reasons which are considered to be ‘extraordinary’
 - ▶ Consideration of whether similar such reasons should be classed as ‘extraordinary’ if they occurred again the following year
- ▶ The first letter is to detail dispensations for the Summer 2024 season.
- ▶ We have also included a number of updates to the guidance, designed to provide further clarity to airlines and airports on what should and should not qualify for a night flight dispensation.
- ▶ An example, is **pre-emptive dispensations**, which have been used at Heathrow to land flights early on poor weather days in order to reduce the risk of delays during the airport’s early morning busy hours, which could then have knock-on effects throughout the day.
- ▶ While recognising the practice has been employed sparingly, we do not feel this should continue.



Long term policy reform

- ▶ In the previous night flight regime consultation, we sought views and evidence on options for future night flight policy.
- ▶ For the purposes of the next regime – to commence in October 2025 – we are not in a position to propose any significant change.
- ▶ At the time of launching the previous consultation, it was with the expectation that we could further consider long-term policy reform in this consultation just launched. However, the speed of recovery of the aviation sector from the impact of the COVID pandemic was always uncertain.
- ▶ We now await evidence from the Aviation Night Noise Effects study and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey, before considering future policy reform.
- ▶ **Annex C** of the consultation material contains a summary of responses received to the questions we asked in the 2020-2021 consultation.



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Consultation questions relevant to Heathrow

- ▶ To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with our proposals for the next night flight regime at Heathrow Airport? Please provide evidence to support your view.

The consultation (**open until 22 May 2024**) can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/night-flight-restrictions-heathrow-gatwick-and-stansted-airports-from-october-2025>

The updated guidance on night flight dispensations can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/night-flight-dispensations>