

THE HEATHROW QUIET NIGHT CHARTER

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED PUNCTUALITY,
PREDICTABLE OPERATIONS AND QUIETER OPERATIONS



Heathrow

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Night flights are an important part of operations at airports around the world, and Heathrow recognises that noise created at night is of a more sensitive concern than during the daytime. For this reason the airport and its partners – NATS, AOC, ACL, British Airways and Virgin Airlines – have come together and agreed to increase collaboration to deliver improvements in night time operations, noise management and mitigation.

Improve punctuality – To achieve a greater number of aircraft arriving and departing on time throughout the day to reduce the knock-on effect of later flights in the night period.

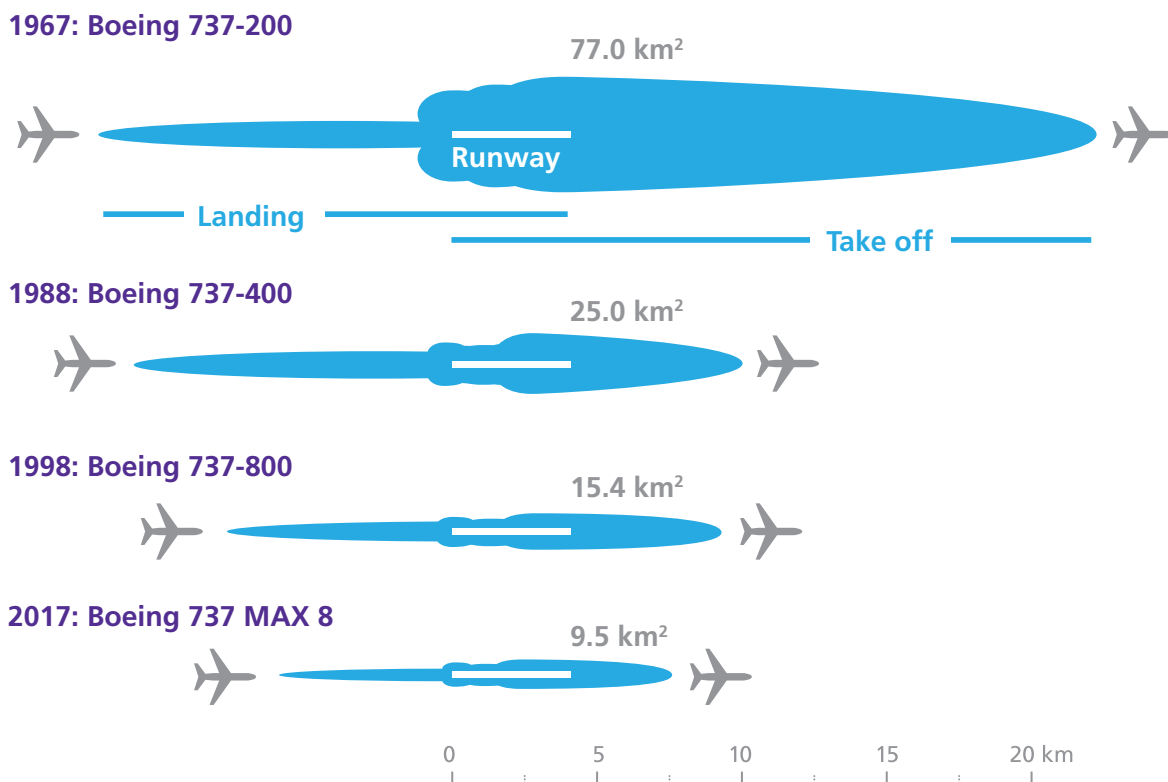
Predictable operations – To provide more certainty to our local communities about periods of respite from aircraft noise.

Quieter operations – To reduce and mitigate noise from aircraft arriving and departing at night.

Together, we will take voluntary steps to implement a wide set of initiatives to improve the performance of our operations and reduce the overall impact of unscheduled night movements on local communities.

Whilst the number of flights has increased significantly since the 1970s, Heathrow's noise footprint has continuously reduced as newer, quieter aircraft have been purchased by airlines. The example below shows how the noise footprint of the Boeing 737 aircraft has shrunk over time, even though the new aircraft is much larger than its predecessors. 40% of aircraft movements at Heathrow are in the lowest international category for noise, with only 0.1% in the highest.

However, despite these achievements, the airport continues to work hard to reduce the impact of our operations.



Boeing 737 noise footprint reduction over time

Night flights

Heathrow takes seriously the impact of operations on the local community and is continuously striving to improve the noise environment. Night flights are a particularly sensitive aspect of the operation for the airport, airlines, passengers and local communities. There is a complex balance in effectively managing the impact whilst realising the economic benefits for the UK and protecting passengers using a capacity constrained airport. The airport has limits on levels of noise emitted, as set by the Government, and therefore has restrictions in place to ensure these limits are not exceeded.

The airport and airline operators have already been successful in reducing and mitigating noise within these limits (for example, the significant reduction in the noisier aircraft types, such as the ageing Boeing 747 fleet, operating late into the night) and we continue to strive to operate well within these limits, rather than simply meet them.

This is an area where collectively, we are committed to work more closely together to reduce the number of flights after 23:30 – and for those that do operate, to operate more quietly. The emphasis of the Charter is to build on already successful actions and take steps to further reduce the impact of our operation during the night.

Purpose of the Quiet Night Charter (QNC)

Heathrow's sustainability leadership plan, Heathrow 2.0, provides a framework upon which the Charter bases its goals; Heathrow's Noise Action Plan also sets out how the airport intends to manage and mitigate the impact of aircraft associated noise over a five year period. The Charter has been developed to identify voluntary initiatives to:

- promote improvements in the reduction and mitigation of noise from aircraft landing and taking off at Heathrow
- look for opportunities to go above and beyond existing measures of assurance and compliance within current processes and regulation
- engender a closer working relationship between airlines, Heathrow and other stakeholders, including NATS
- further promote and build trust with local communities, providing opportunities to engage on the work within the Charter through Heathrow's community forums
- recognise best practice and identify where and how this can be shared in the operational and noise environment across all stakeholders
- support the Heathrow 2.0 sustainability programme.





Working together with our partners

The Charter intends to bring together and recognise the noise management and mitigation successes that have been and are being achieved by the airport and its partners, including NATS, the AOC, ACL, and particularly our home-based carriers British Airways and Virgin Airlines. The Charter offers opportunities to develop and achieve greater success by working in closer collaboration, so that we may identify how we can excel at being a good neighbour while not imposing additional operational restrictions on the airlines.

Looking to the future we want to enhance and strengthen relationships between our industry partners to identify, share and implement voluntary initiatives, strategies and best practice so that we can support the following aims:

- reduce the number of non-dispensed¹ late running arriving and departing flights in the night quota period
- provide a more predictable operation to support expectations of local communities
- reduce and mitigate the levels of noise experienced by local communities
- offer greater awareness of how the operation is run at Heathrow by providing real-time information to local communities.

To take the Charter forward an Operations Group has been set up with Heathrow's industry partners (as listed above), to oversee its implementation and review its performance as we progress. The main purpose of the Group will be to:

- take ownership of the Charter to deliver its initiatives and continually review performance
- lead performance review of unscheduled night flights
- develop performance measures and recommend improvement actions
- conduct analysis of further initiatives to improve performance.

Providing evidence of our success will be important to help us positively engage and collaborate with all stakeholders, including the local communities, and build positive relationships.

The Charter intends to be consistent with the ICAO "balanced approach" which provides a framework for noise management:

- quieter aircraft
- quieter operations
- land use planning & mitigation
- operating restrictions / voluntary measures.

In addition, Heathrow advocates the following:

- introducing voluntary measures
- working closely with local communities
- open and transparent reporting.

Working together with our local communities

We recognise that enhanced collaboration and commitment to the QNC on a voluntary basis requires transparency to ensure effectiveness. Transparency implies openness, communication and accountability. The Operations Group intends to improve on what information and data can be more easily shared to view and review performance. This will support the adoption of best practices, identify trends and make comparisons to inform future progress. Transparency will also support the ability to report progress to the local communities and provide a platform from which expectations can be managed realistically on all sides, remembering the complex competing challenges involved.

To maintain the valued input the existing community forums provide, there will be opportunities to share the progress of the QNC through these groups. There may also be the opportunity to debate aspects of the Charter and shape potential future initiatives by putting these to the Operations Group to review. Local communities will be provided with:

- reports resulting from factual data and analysis
- real-time operational information via the Noise website and Noise Twitter account
- continued ability to respond in real-time.

¹ The existing Government dispensation mechanism is unaffected by this Charter. "Non-dispensed" flights are those flights authorised to operate within the current Government night flight restrictions and use available movement (arrival or departure) and relevant QC points (noise level) that are allocated to the airline or airport for use by those aircraft not subject to dispensation criteria.

OUR AGREED INITIATIVES

A number of agreed initiatives have been developed to support the implementation of the Charter throughout and beyond the next five years. A regular review of how effective these initiatives are over time will be conducted with the opportunity to adapt, or add to them as time progresses.

INITIATIVE	PURPOSE
1 CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT OF "LATE RUNNERS"	Working together to consistently improve performance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• avoid and mitigate unscheduled flights operating after 23:30• bring those marginal late flights forward to leave before 23:30• manage those aircraft that do fly so that they operate no later than 01:00• identify short and long-term trends more quickly to assist and address persistent poor performing flights
2 ATC INTERVENTION TO MITIGATE NIGHT JET MOVEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closer monitoring of individual flight status and flight plans by Air Traffic Control (ATC) and Airport Operations (APOC) teams• To enable ATC specifically to take a more proactive and timely intervention where this may avoid a flight after 23:30 e.g bring a flight forward "in the queue" to enable a turn-round and depart prior to 23:30 where a flight operates late, to do so closer to 23:30 rather than later
3 NOISE EXEMPT FLIGHT SCHEDULE CONSTRAINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noise exempt flights will be treated similarly to all aircraft operators in the management of the airport's night flight regime• Noise exempt aircraft are no longer scheduled to operate during the night• Emergency flights remain exempt
4 INVESTING FOR A QUIETER NIGHT	The combined investment of all parties to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• support predictable, on time, quieter operations• focus on the expanded Balanced Approach principles• influence investment across a broad range of environments, e.g training, IT, changing operating procedures, integration• scope opportunities for collaboration/sharing best practice and end to end processes across the entire airport
5 INFLUENCE THE USE OF QUIETER AIRCRAFT IN THE NIGHT PERIOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to support, promote and influence the reduction and risk of operating noisier aircraft types at night (23:00 – 07:00)
6 OPERATING PROTOCOLS FOR LATE ARRIVALS TO AVOID LATE DEPARTURES IN THE NIGHT QUOTA PERIOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree a set of operating protocols to avoid delayed arrivals leading to delayed departures after 23:30

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACL	Airports Coordination Limited
AOC	Airline Operators Committee – the airline operators’ representative body
APOC	Airport Operations Centre – 24 hour monitoring and control centre to support collaborative decision-making in the management of the airport
ATC	Air Traffic Control
Balanced Approach	ICAO’s recommended approach to the management of aircraft noise through the exploration of four principle elements
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
GA	General Aviation – commercial aviation that involves business and private flying and other non-standard commercial scheduled air transport services (such as royalty and VIPs)
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
Late runner	An aircraft arriving or departing outside of an airport’s restricted operating hours
Noise Action Plan	Heathrow’s five year plan that sets out measures to manage and reduce the effects of aircraft noise
NATS	National Air Traffic Services – provider of ATC services and resource
Night flight	An aircraft that is scheduled to operate between 23:30 and 06:00
Night period	The period between 23:00 and 07:00
Night Quota Period	The period between 23:30 and 06:00
Noise exempt	An aircraft that has been rated for its noise output as zero (QC0)
QC	Quota Count – the amount of quota (QC points i.e QC0.125/.5/1/2/4/8/16) assigned to an individual aircraft that might operate a night movement
QNC	Quiet Night Charter

Get in touch:

If you would like to receive more information, or would like a large text or alternative format of this document please contact us:

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