INCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Agusta A109S Grand, G-PBWR
No & Type of Engines:	2 Pratt & Whitney Canada PW207C turboshaft engines
Year of Manufacture:	2007 (Serial no: 22050)
Date & Time (UTC):	5 May 2017 at 1030 hrs
Location:	London Stansted Airport
Type of Flight:	Commercial Air Transport (Passenger)
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1 Passengers - 1
Injuries:	Crew - None Passengers - None
Nature of Damage:	Failure of left side horizontal stabiliser
Commander's Licence:	Airline Transport Pilot's Licence
Commander's Age:	42 years
Commander's Flying Experience:	3,983 hours (of which 1,152 were on type) Last 90 days - 50 hours Last 28 days - 24 hours
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

Synopsis

After a normal landing, ground staff made the pilot aware of a problem with the left side horizontal stabiliser which had failed. The pilot reported that no unusual handling characteristics were experienced. The area where the horizontal stabiliser had failed was the subject of an EASA Airworthiness Directive which required repeat inspections.

History of the flight

The helicopter was being positioned from Dunsfold Aerodrome to London Stansted Airport to collect a commercial passenger for an onward flight. The 'A' Check and pre-flight inspections had been carried out prior to flight and nothing untoward was observed. The pilot reported that there was quite a lot of low-level atmospheric turbulence during the flight, but no more than expected and no unusual handling characteristics were experienced.

On arrival the ground staff indicated there was a problem with the aircraft. On inspection, the pilot observed that the left side horizontal stabiliser had failed at approximately mid-span. The failed portion had remained attached by sections of its skin and electrical cabling, (Figure 1).

Figure 1

View of failed horizontal stabiliser, looking aft

Other information

The horizontal stabiliser fitted to this helicopter was included in EASA Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2011-0150, which requires repetitive inspection in the area of the failure and, depending on findings, corrective action. The repetitive inspection was required every 50 flying hours and it had last been completed on this aircraft approximately 45 hours previously, with no adverse findings. The failure was reported to the regulator via the mandatory occurrence reporting scheme (MOR) and the failed part was returned to the manufacturer for detailed examination.

Safety action

Prompted by this event, the manufacturer issued a Service Bulletin providing new instructions for a one-time inspection and new repetitive inspections at a reduced inspection threshold and interval. As a result of this and its own safety assessment, EASA issued Emergency Airworthiness Directive AD 2017-0085-E, on 12 May 2017, to mandate these instructions.