

Dear Sirs,

**How aircraft noise affects us:**

I live in Kew Gardens, Richmond, directly underneath the Heathrow flight path. Today is a beautiful day – one of many that we have been lucky to enjoy this summer – and it was lovely, sitting in the garden, chatting to my husband and enjoying the sunshine, until 15.02 hours. At that point the flight path changed to overhead and we could no longer maintain a conversation so moved indoors. As I type this the planes are flying overhead every 90 seconds and the decibel counter on my phone indicates that the noise level is around 87db every time a plane passes over. The racket will now be non-stop until we go to bed. This summer we have been forced to check the Heathrow flight path rotation schedule before we can arrange a bbq as it's impossible to hear anyone in the garden unless they shout at the top of their voice, and, typically, the flight path has been overhead most sunny Sundays.

I often have to work from home and the plane noise dictates that the windows of my office have to be closed, otherwise the person at the other end of the phone can't hear me. When watching TV in the evenings, we have to turn the volume up far louder than usual in order to hear. And that's before we talk about the early morning flights. It's a nonsense to say that flights there are only 16 overnight flights allowed to land before 6am as there is always the get-out clause of a 'strong following wind' which means that I am frequently awoken at any time from 4.30am onwards as planes from the USA roar overhead. We now sleep in industrial-strength earplugs and can still hear them, especially when the weather is cloudy and they sound like they're landing on our roof. Sometimes our windows rattle and we're 10 miles from the airport!

**Measurement of aircraft noise:**

The discussion paper indicates that nearly three-quarters of a million people are affected by aircraft noise from Heathrow. That's a big number that somehow diminishes the severity of the effects because this will range from those who can hear it faintly when the wind is in the right direction through people like us who literally can't hear ourselves think for half of the day to the poor people who live in Hounslow and West Drayton. I understand that the way that you measure noise disruption uses the LAeq16h method – averaging out the noise over a 16 hour period. This is clearly a nonsense when for half of the day the noise is deafening and for the other half there is no aircraft noise meaning, that the average indicates an acceptable noise level throughout the day. Also, the fact that the measurement doesn't commence until 7am is clearly useless as we suffer so much noise between the hours of 6-7am when all of the red-eyes arrive from the west. The noise measures should only relate to those times when the flight path is overhead otherwise they are meaningless.

**Different ways of reducing noise:**

I agree with HACAN's view on the various options outlined in the discussion paper <http://www.hacan.org.uk/resources/reports/airports%20commission.noise.paper.hacan.response.pdf> as they have clearly been rigorous in their analysis of the options. However, I would like to say that the option of noise insulation may help those who don't sleep at the top of the house but, even though we live within the area where window insulation subsidies are available, it would have been pointless as the noise rumbles through the roof and the walls!