



Ministry of Defence

Air Command Secretariat
Spitfire Block
Headquarters Air Command
Royal Air Force
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Ref. FOI2016/05303

By email: [REDACTED]

14 June 2016

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 19 May requesting the following information.

I would like to request information with regards to several reports I have received from people in the Ayr and Prestwick areas who have heard extremely loud military aircraft flying between the hours of 23:30 and 02:00 within the last two weeks.

I would like to have as much information as possible on any recent (within the last two weeks) military jets that have been flying in the Ayr, Prestwick, North Norfolk, North Devon and Berwick areas in the middle of the night.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. I can confirm that we hold information on the subject you have requested. However, it has been assessed that the costs for which we are permitted to charge in providing this information will exceed the appropriate limit. This appropriate limit is specified in regulations and for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3 and a half working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

In order to ascertain the military bases from which aircraft flew over the Ayr, Prestwick, North Norfolk, North Devon and Berwick areas between 5-19 May, it would be necessary to examine individual aircraft records from all flying units to identify individual aircraft locations at the times you have requested. There is no central record which contains the details of all military aircraft flights. It has been assessed that it would take in excess of 24 hours for one RAF Station to examine individual aircraft records for this period. Under the terms of Section 12 of the FOI Act, this means that we are not obliged to comply with your request. Unfortunately, it would not be possible for you to refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit as examination for one specific time or at one specific flying unit would still exceed the cost limit.

Under Section 16 of the Act, the Department is required to provide advice and assistance. You may find it helpful to note that the Ministry of Defence does hold records of some *planned* military aircraft routes, although this may not include all of the planned military aircraft activity. These have been checked and I can confirm that the following military fast jet aircraft were authorised to fly in the Ayr, Prestwick, North Norfolk, North Devon and Berwick areas between the hours of 22:00 and 03:00 during the period 5-19 May.

AYR & PRESTWICK

DATE	AIRCRAFT	BASE
10 MAY 16	TORNADO	RAF MARHAM
11 MAY 16	TYPHOON	RAF LOSSIEMOUTH
17 MAY 16	TYPHOON	RAF LOSSIEMOUTH

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

DATE	AIRCRAFT	BASE
10 MAY 16	TORNADO X 4	RAF LOSSIEMOUTH
18 MAY 16	TORNADO X 2 TYPHOON X 2	RAF MARHAM RAF LOSSIEMOUTH

NORTH DEVON

DATE	AIRCRAFT	BASE
5 MAY 16	HAWK	RAF VALLEY

NORTH NORFOLK

DATE	AIRCRAFT	BASE
16 MAY 16	TORNADO X 2	RAF MARHAM
17 MAY 16	TORNADO	RAF MARHAM
19 MAY 16	TORNADO X 2 TYPHOON X 2 TYPHOON x 4	RAF MARHAM RAF CONINGSBY RAF CONINGSBY

I can assure you that the MOD takes its responsibilities to the general public very seriously indeed and we do realise that night flying can be disturbing. The amount of night low flying remains proportional to the operational requirement. Although we do carefully consider the timing of night low flying, I am afraid that it is not always possible to avoid some disturbance to those on the ground.

Further information explaining the importance of military low flying and measures taken to minimise disturbance can be found on the gov.uk website at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/military-low-flying>.

If members of the public wish to make a specific complaint about military flying activity, they can pass the details to the responsible Ministry of Defence officials who will investigate the activity. They can be contacted at: Ministry of Defence Low Flying Complaints and Enquiries Unit, Building 22, RAF Wittering, Peterborough, PE8 6HB, Telephone: 01780 417558, Email address: CAS-lowflying@mod.uk.

If you are not satisfied with this response or wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal

resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed]

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Air Command Secretariat