



Department  
for Transport

# **Night Flight Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted from October 2025**

## Decision Document

December 2024

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# Executive summary

This Government response follows a consultation launched on 22 February 2024 which sought views on the night flight regime at the noise-designated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) beyond October 2025, when the existing night flight regime comes to an end. The consultation closed on 22 May 2024, and respondents were able to reply via smart-survey, e-mail and by post.

Following the consultation we have reviewed all responses and taken into account evidence and views provided. This has led us to the conclusion that it is appropriate to proceed with a bridging night flight regime, as proposed in the consultation.

A decision has been reached to implement a bridging night flight regime at all three noise-designated airports, maintaining existing movement and quota count limits. As per the proposal put forward in the consultation, the next night flight regime will run for 3 years, from October 2025 – October 2028.

In the consultation, we proposed a bridging regime of 3 years, while we await evidence from the Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE) study, and also from the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey.

Unfortunately, the ANNE study will not be completed until later than previously anticipated. The subjective study has taken longer than expected due to the ambitious and complex nature of the study, reflected by the need for a consortium of suppliers with different skills to design and deliver the work. This has required additional time to complete analysis and peer review.

Furthermore, in light of the additional time required for the subjective study, we have revised the estimated time required for the analysis, drafting and peer review of the objective study.

Our priority remains to deliver a high quality, robust evidence base and we are taking all necessary steps to deliver this. We are now working on the basis that we will have the full evidence base from the ANNE study published during Autumn 2026.

That said, we also anticipate that the notification period for announcing future operating restrictions will be shortened (a change which can be made using powers

in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023). Therefore, we still believe that a 3 year regime is possible, and can still enable the results from the ANNE study to be considered in proposals for the subsequent regime.

In regard to the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey, the expectation is the first phase of findings will be produced in late 2025 or early 2026.

As proposed in the consultation, the movement and Quota Count (QC) limits at Heathrow and Gatwick for the next regime will remain the same as they are now, while we await evidence that could support future change.

At Stansted, we have heard a strong level of opposition from local communities and from local authorities who do not wish to see Government-set night flight restrictions removed, fearing that this would result in an increased number of night flights.

While we recognise that control via local planning conditions works at other airports, and could work at Stansted in the future, we are aware that the Planning Inspector noted that the aircraft movement and QC limits imposed by Government are restricted to the 6.5-hour night quota period (between 23:30 and 06:00). To provide local communities with greater protection from aircraft noise, the Planning Inspector imposed a night noise limit on operations at Stansted for the 8-hour night period (between 23:00 and 07:00). This new control is based on Quota Count, rather than on a limit of movements.

Paragraph 44 of the Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision<sup>1</sup>, dated 26 May 2021, reads as follows:

*“However, the night flight restrictions do not cover the full 8 hour period used in the LAeq assessment. Consequently, if only the night flight restrictions were to be relied upon, there would be no control of aircraft noise between 23:00 and 23:30 hours and between 06:00 and 07:00 hours. The ESA has demonstrated that the reductions in night noise would be beneficial to health. For these reasons, inclusion of the LAeq 8hour restriction in condition 7 would be necessary. In coming to this view, the Panel has taken into account the dual restrictions that would apply. However, the night noise contour requirement in condition 7 would be necessary to secure the benefit and it has not been demonstrated that the night noise restrictions would be sufficient in this respect.”*

As the new QC limit proposed at Stansted applies to the 8-hour night period (23:00 – 07:00) and not the 6.5 hour night quota period (23:30 – 06:00), this means that in the absence of a Government-set movement limit, flights currently scheduled between 23:00-23:30 and 06:00-07:00 could be moved into the night quota period (23:30-06:00), and could potentially be clustered in the middle of the night, therefore leading to a potentially worse outcome in the core night hours than currently exists.

Pending the results of the Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE) study we do not currently have evidence to assess the impact of such a change. At this present

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www Uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10878/Decision-letter-Stansted-Airport-Appeal/pdf/Appeal\\_Decision\\_-\\_3256619A.pdf?m=1622040655847](https://www Uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10878/Decision-letter-Stansted-Airport-Appeal/pdf/Appeal_Decision_-_3256619A.pdf?m=1622040655847)

moment, it seems premature to remove the Government-set night flight controls at Stansted.

We have therefore reached a decision in favour of Option 3 at Stansted, for Government-set night flight restrictions to continue. For the next regime, the movement and quota count limits at Stansted will remain the same as they are now, while we await evidence that could support future change.

The structure of the next night flight regime is summarised in the table below:

**Table 1 – Structure of the night flight regime, October 2025 - October 2028**

		<b>Movement Limit</b>	<b>Noise Quota Limit</b>
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

# 1. Consultation responses – breakdown of the numbers

- 1.1 This section provides an overview of the number of consultation responses received on our proposals. The following chapters then summarise the responses received to individual questions on our consultation proposals, along with the Government's response on these matters.
- 1.2 We received 1,954 responses to the consultation. Of these, 1,149 were submitted via the Smart Survey, while 803 were received via email, and 2 via the post.
- 1.3 96.5% of the smart survey responses were individual respondents and 3.5% were on behalf of an organisation.

The breakdown of respondent type is given below:

**Table 2 – Breakdown of responses by organisation type and individual**

Individuals	1,822
Aircraft noise community group or other environmental group	30
Airline	9
Airport	4
Business organisation / Trade association	14
Freight carrier or express freight service provider	3
Public body, MPs, Councils and Local Authorities	69
Consultative committees	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,954</b>

## 2. Length of the bridging regime

- 2.1 At the time of launching the consultation, we expected to have the final report from the Aviation Night Noise Effects study (ANNE) by the end of 2025.
- 2.2 Unfortunately, the ANNE study will not be completed until later than previously anticipated. The subjective study has taken longer than expected due to the ambitious and complex nature of the study, reflected by the need for a consortium of suppliers with different skills to design and deliver the work. This has required additional time to complete analysis and peer review.
- 2.3 Furthermore, in light of the additional time required for the subjective study, we have revised the estimated time required for the analysis, drafting and finalising of the objective study.
- 2.4 Our priority remains to deliver a high quality, robust evidence base and we are taking all necessary steps to deliver this.
- 2.5 We are now working on the basis that we will have the full evidence base from the ANNE study, following Peer Review, published during Autumn 2026. In respect of the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey, the expectation is that the CAA will produce the first phase of findings in late 2025 or early 2026.
- 2.6 While recognising the delay to the ANNE study, we also anticipate that the notification period for announcing future operating restrictions will be shortened (a change which can be made using powers in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023).
- 2.7 Therefore, we still believe that a 3 year regime is possible, and can still enable the results from the ANNE study to be considered in proposals for the subsequent regime.
- 2.8 A number of community responses did refer to the proposed length of the regime, with some recognising that three years appeared sensible while awaiting results from the research studies, before then considering changes.
- 2.9 The alternative view from communities, however, was that the Government should consider further night flight restrictions right away, saying that there is already a substantial body of evidence which points to the negative health impacts of night flights on communities.
- 2.10 A parish council expressed the view that a 3-year bridging regime showed a lack of urgency and considered this length of time to be excessive given the impact of aircraft noise on affected communities in their area.



- 2.11 We received a number of responses from industry, which while being supportive of the proposed extension of the night flight regime, also recommended that the proposed 3-year regime be extended to 5 years. This recommendation was made with a view to the time required to assess the ongoing studies/surveys (ANNE and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey) over a suitable period of full recovery, whilst also developing suitable mechanisms and indicators for assessing progress against every aspect of the night-time noise abatement objective, including metrics on sustainable growth.
- 2.12 Responses from industry also made the point that airlines need to work within consistent, achievable parameters and suggested that 5 years would be a more realistic timeframe in which to review and consider a replacement for the current regime. The argument was also made that a 5-year timeframe would provide operators with certainty for planning and investment decisions. Responses from other carriers expressed the view that 5 years, rather than 3 years, would be needed to provide sufficient time to develop robust metrics to assess the benefits of night flights.
- 2.13 We also received a response from an airport consultative committee which suggested that the next regime should be set for a longer time period than 3 years, in order to provide some certainty for local residents and for the designated airports and their stakeholders. A local authority in the Stansted area, also expressed a preference for a 5-year regime to allow more time for economic planning.
- 2.14 However, we recognise that a longer bridging regime will not be welcomed by many community groups, especially those calling for a ban on night flights. Therefore on balance, and taking all factors into consideration, the decision has been reached that the bridging night flight regime should run for 3 years. This will give the opportunity to again review the night flight regime sooner than if a 5 year regime were to be implemented.
- 2.15 During the next regime, we plan to continue work building the evidence base with a view to informing future decisions.

## 3. The next night flight regime at Heathrow Airport

3.1 In the consultation, we proposed a bridging regime of 3 years, covering October 2025 to October 2028, while we await further evidence that could support change in the future.

3.2 For the next regime, we proposed that movement and QC limits for Heathrow Airport would remain the same as they are now.

3.3 We asked the following question:

**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.**

3.4 There was some recognition across responses, from both industry and communities, that while waiting for the Aviation Night Noise Effect (ANNE) study and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey, keeping current controls at Heathrow would be a reasonable and pragmatic approach. A common feeling was that it makes sense to get the additional information on aviation noise and its impact before proposing any changes.

3.5 Responses from local communities noted that current limits are there to protect the health and welfare of local residents, and while expressing a desire for there to be no increase to noise at night, some local residents said they were content to see the status quo continue until the results of the research studies are known. There was some acknowledgement from individuals that Heathrow is one of the world's leading airports and needs to have some night flights, and while these must not be excessive, some expressed the view that the current regime is broadly acceptable.

3.6 However, we also received many responses from local communities and individuals which strongly disagreed with the proposals, and which called for a ban on Heathrow night flights, saying that there are currently far too many night flights allowed, in what is a densely populated area, and which cause sleep disturbance and seriously affect well-being.

3.7 The feeling was expressed that there is already a substantial body of evidence pointing to the negative impact of aviation night noise on health. In the view of these

respondents there is no need to wait for the outcome of the ANNE study before taking steps to limit Heathrow night flights.

- 3.8 Local residents spoke of there being far too many night-time flights, both late at night (after 23:30) and early in the morning (before 06:00). The early morning arrivals into Heathrow, from 04:30, were a particular focus for community respondents, who said 04:30 is not the time most people get up in the morning, and felt this could not be considered a reasonable time for such disturbance, and questioned why it was necessary.
- 3.9 The early morning arrivals into Heathrow were described as being particularly disruptive and debilitating, and were called a scourge on the health and well-being of those living under the flightpaths. Aircraft landing in the early hours were described as being at the louder end of the noise scale because they tend to be larger aircraft completing long-haul flights. The point was made that a single flight at 04:30 can ruin a night of sleep, and once woken at that time, it can then be hard to get back to sleep. It was said that stress and lack of sleep, especially on an ongoing basis, has a serious impact on health, in turn impacting local NHS services.
- 3.10 Some respondents were of the view that current aircraft movements within the night quota period (23:30-06:00) at Heathrow could all be rescheduled outside of this time, to operate during the day. It was felt that it should be possible to push back at least the first arrivals between 04:30-05:30. Some respondents accepted that this would have impacts, but suggested these would be a small price to pay for the improvement to the living environment of thousands of residents around Heathrow Airport affected by noise.
- 3.11 One local campaign group was in favour of bringing the later scheduled evening departures forward by 30 minutes, so no flights depart after 23:00, and shifting arrival times back by around 90 minutes for the early morning arrivals (flights which currently land between 04:30-06:00). In their view, the early morning arrivals would still come in and provide the core economic value, and only a marginal value could be lost.
- 3.12 Another local campaign group called for penalties to be introduced for airlines with late departures from Heathrow. They also support pushing as many of the early morning scheduled flights as possible to daytime flights. Their response referred to Heathrow saying in 2016 that the airport would be able to add 25,000 flights per year using new technology, and so suggested the airport should be able to shift night flights to the daytime.
- 3.13 One local society based in south-west London, gave the view that for arrivals before 06:00, an easterly preference system should apply, instead of the current system of alternating between easterly and westerly preference – believing that easterly preference would reduce the number of flights approaching over London, and so significantly reduce the total number of people who are impacted. The society did suggest that when aircraft are approaching from the west before 06:00, the approach routes could be tweaked to avoid the larger population centres of Windsor and Maidenhead.

- 3.14 There were also calls made for the banning of noisier aircraft at night, with one suggestion made that aircraft classified as QC2 and QC1 should be banned at the earliest possible date, followed by a ban on QC0.5 by 2033 and on QC0.25 by no later than 2038.
- 3.15 One resident suggested a more nuanced approach to early hours scheduling into Heathrow, with no flights between 00:30-05:00, then a double use of an airline's quota for the shoulder hours to this, for example, 00:00-00:30 and 05:00-05:30, in order to discourage the use of these hours where possible.
- 3.16 Some respondents called for a total ban on night flights at Heathrow, with 23:00–07:00 being a common suggestion, with other variants around 8 hours being suggested, including 23:00-06:00, or 22:30-06:30. In the view of these respondents, maintaining current night flight restrictions would be unacceptable, with the point being made that 3 years is a long time to wait for those looking to see a noise problem reduced. The comment was made that no effort appears to have been made with these proposals to improve the lives of residents impacted by night flights.
- 3.17 Residents spoke of the number of flights at night being really disruptive to physical health, mental health and to the sleep of children, and said that double-glazing seems to make little difference. Others made the point that during summer months people need to sleep with windows open.
- 3.18 A campaign group called for the Government to ban night flights for a full 8-hour period each night, other than for emergency or humanitarian purposes. They added that if any night flights are to be permitted, they should be limited to those that have been independently demonstrated to be essential for economic reasons. The group added that given the known harms caused by night flights there should be a presumption against their operation unless an airport can provide conclusive evidence of very substantial economic benefits on a route-by-route basis. This group also called for both summer and winter quota limits at Heathrow to be reduced to a level somewhat below current actual utilisation to provide an incentive for the use of the least noisy aircraft at night.
- 3.19 Another local campaign group described the proposals for Heathrow as totally inadequate as a response to the detrimental effect the current night flight regime has on the life and health of local residents.
- 3.20 Other respondents also expressed the view that the perceived economic benefits of night flights were not convincing, and called for the benefits of night flights to be objectively balanced against the local impacts.
- 3.21 A local campaign group said that the Government must now commit to undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the economic, social, environmental and health impacts of night flights. In their view, there needs to be transparent information from the commercial side of the equation, if local communities are to be able to trust that an equitable balance between the positive and negative impacts of night flights is truly being sought.
- 3.22 A response from local MPs noted that the night-time noise abatement objective is “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.” They took issue with a statement in the consultation document saying, “we believe the existing restrictions on night flights are sufficient to meet the new night-time noise abatement objective”. The MPs were of the view that given the proposals for Heathrow amount to no significant changes for night flights in and out of Heathrow, they do not believe they can fulfil the Government’s stated aim to “**where possible reduce**” disruption from night flights and improve residents’ lives.

- 3.23 Another local MP described night flights as a wholly unnecessary strain on the liveability of London and said that they are indefensible due to the negative effect they have on thousands of people’s sleep. They added that people living under Heathrow’s flightpaths will inevitably be suffering from regular sleep disturbance, and the knock-on effect on health, economic productivity and general enjoyment of life, which should not be overlooked.
- 3.24 Some respondents called for the Government to lower its metric for judging success of the night flight regime to the area of and number of people in the 40dB  $L_{Aeq,6.5 \text{ hour night}}$ <sup>2</sup> contour (as opposed to the current 48dB  $L_{Aeq,6.5 \text{ hour night}}$  contour), in line with the World Health Organisation recommendation to decrease noise levels below 40dB  $L_{\text{night}}$  (23.00-07.00) to prevent effects on sleep.
- 3.25 There was a small element amongst individual local community responses which were clearly in favour of night flights at Heathrow, and which referred to London being a modern 24-hour city, and offered the view that Heathrow needs to grow. They made the point that aviation is vital to the UK economy, and that Heathrow is a major global hub, not only for the UK, but for Europe.
- 3.26 These responses were of the view that in times of economic stagnation, there is a need to boost the economy and this means keeping the early morning arrivals at Heathrow, as removing them would only hamper UK economic growth. Others gave the view that the UK is losing competitiveness to other markets due to the current night flight restrictions. These respondents made reference to commercial passenger and freight services being an important industry supporting thousands of jobs and businesses in the UK. Others made the point that aviation noise has noticeably reduced in recent years due to improved technology leading to quieter aircraft.
- 3.27 Calls were also made for more research around the importance of local jobs, livelihoods and the economy before the subsequent noise regime, after this next one, is put in place.
- 3.28 Local authority responses were mixed, with some giving support to the proposed bridging regime and welcoming the collection of a new evidence base, while others expressed disappointment with the proposals for night flight limits at Heathrow to be unchanged. Calls were made for quota count limits to be progressively reduced to encourage industry to continue to use and develop quieter aircraft. Other local authority responses stressed the importance of 8 hours of sleep at night for their

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<sup>2</sup>  $L_{Aeq,6.5 \text{ hour night}}$  refers to the noise levels in the period of the night 23:30-06:00

residents, and were of the view that there already exists an evidence base which could be used to inform new policy.

- 3.29 Calls were made for the Night Quota Period (23:30-06:00) at Heathrow to be extended to reflect the full 8-hour night period (23:00-07:00), with a view that noise from late night and early morning flights seriously disrupts sleep.
- 3.30 Other responses from local campaign groups suggested that as a step toward the elimination of night flights at Heathrow, the quota count limit in each summer and winter period should be reduced immediately under the new regime. There were also calls for the current practice of allowing an unused portion of the quota for a period to be rolled over to boost the following period, to be stopped.
- 3.31 A response called for the Government to start using the night flight regime to deliver the health benefits that 100,000s of Londoners desperately need.
- 3.32 Industry responses were broadly in support of the proposals for Heathrow, and recognised that the research work which has been commissioned must conclude before any significant changes to the regime are considered. An extension of the existing regime was described as a sensible and proportionate approach, which ensures the significant benefits provided by night flights are retained, while providing time for the research studies to be completed. Responses noted that Heathrow has a unique role to play in connecting the UK to global growth, and said that regulatory continuity, stability and certainty are important for the airlines and the sustainability of aviation.
- 3.33 It was said that night flights play a crucial role in making Heathrow a successful international hub airport, and that transfer passengers, in particular, play an important role in establishing and maintaining the range of destinations and frequency of service. The view was provided that moving early-morning arrivals outside of the night period would reduce the opportunity for transfer passengers to onward connect at a UK airport, and impact route viability.
- 3.34 Industry responses also made the point that night flights form an important part of operations at airports around the world, and that the zonal time differences in an inter-connected global transport system mean it is inevitable for international airports to have flights late at night and early in the morning.
- 3.35 It was said that the relationship between flight times and clock times means that early morning arrivals at Heathrow are required to effectively serve flights from China, south-east Asia and southern Africa. Last year at Heathrow, the time period from 06:00-06:59 was the busiest hour for arriving passengers, transfers and arriving cargo across the day, and it was said that this demonstrates how valuable these operations are to the UK economy and to UK connectivity to the world.
- 3.36 Another response from industry said the early morning arrivals and late evening departures enable a full day's business in the UK and maximise opportunities for those making flight connections. In their view, by feeding other flights, transfer passengers play a critical role in maintaining the range and frequency of viable destinations served.

- 3.37 Industry responses continued to stress that UK aviation provides critically important infrastructure that supports the UK economy through the trade in goods and services, tourism, connectivity to critical markets around the world, and through direct and indirect employment in communities across the UK. Responses said that night flights play a critical role both in supporting commercial airline operations and in facilitating international trade, with UK wide social and environmental benefits. Industry responses also added that without operations in the early morning or late evening, UK aviation would be unable to provide connectivity to critical long-haul markets in North America or Asia, eroding competitiveness and economic growth potential.
- 3.38 One industry response made the point that with the overall noise impact of aircraft movements at Heathrow continuing to fall, in their view consideration should be given to whether aircraft movement caps should be retained, given the night-time noise abatement objective is to mitigate night noise, not movements per se. This response also gave the view that movements in the night period provide a significant national economic benefit, as well as for many airport communities (for example, through employment), and should be considered to represent a significant contribution to quality of life.
- 3.39 Another response from industry said it is critical that Government commit to a regular in-depth assessment of the economic value of night flights to measure their value to the UK economy. Others said that decisions on future regimes must be considered with full regard to the Balanced Approach<sup>3</sup>, taking into account both the local and national strategic economic importance of night flights.
- 3.40 Industry responses said that the express freight industry relies on night flights to deliver a time-definite international service, and the ability to land and depart in the night period is an operational necessity. Responses said that the speed of delivery that air freight can offer is vital for the UK's manufacturing, automotive and pharmaceutical industries, especially where just-in-time practices and high value commodities are being flown. It was said that night flights allow the latest possible collection time from customers whilst guaranteeing next-day delivery.
- 3.41 The night period was described as crucial for the supply chains of businesses across different sectors and the argument was made that any move to curtail night flights would threaten the UK's competitiveness. Responses noted that the early morning arrivals into Heathrow do not just carry international passengers, but also utilise belly-hold for freight. In their view, these flights arriving from the Far East, Asia and Africa help facilitate trade in strategically important international markets.
- 3.42 Lack of growth opportunities for the express freight sector featured prominently in industry responses, which said that airport access and growth in the south-east of

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<sup>3</sup> The Government's approach to managing aircraft noise is based on the principles of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Assembly's "Balanced Approach" to aircraft noise management. The Balanced Approach consists of identifying noise problems that exist at an airport and then assessing the cost-effectiveness of the various measures available to reduce noise through the exploration of 4 principal elements, which are: reduction of noise at source (quieter aircraft); land-use planning and management; noise abatement operational procedures (optimising how aircraft are flown and the routes they follow to limit the noise impacts); operating restrictions (including night flight restrictions brought about via this process).

England is increasingly difficult for express freight carriers due to the cumulative impact of the national regulatory approach, locally imposed planning restrictions and local airport rules.

- 3.43 Responses from the freight sector continued to stress that for UK businesses to remain competitive in a global market, night flights remain a critical part of the jigsaw. Reference was made to a 2023 study titled **UK Business Survey : Importance of Express Services**, which found that 95% of businesses surveyed stated express services were vital or important to their business operations and 93% stated express services were important or very important to their competitiveness.<sup>4</sup>
- 3.44 Industry responses did acknowledge the need to continue to be good partners in achieving a balance of interests, including reduction of the impact of noise on local communities. They said that they continue to work to reduce this impact, including through supporting the work of the Sustainable Aviation coalition. Responses said that the on-going introduction of latest-generation aircraft into fleets will bring noise output benefits through to the mid-2030s, with the proportion of UK flights operated by these airlines increasing year on year.
- 3.45 Some industry responses were of the view that the proposed bridging regime represented a missed opportunity for economic growth, by not moving from the current regime based on what were described as arbitrary movement limits, over to a Quota Count based system. They argued that such a move would explicitly recognise that with the further advances in technology and the introduction of the next generation of quieter aircraft, as well as initiatives ongoing or being considered to mitigate impacts to local communities, there should be opportunity for a further upward increase in aircraft movements at night, while limiting or reducing the noise impacts and providing additional economic value in a controlled manner.
- 3.46 It was said that investment in the latest generation of aircraft engines and airframes is ongoing and yet, as things stand, the current regime does not reward improvements made in noise performance with any opportunities for growth. It was felt that a Quota Count-only based system could further incentivise new innovations and operational efficiencies.

## Government response

- 3.47 Having taken into account the responses received to the consultation, the Government intends to proceed with a bridging night flight regime at Heathrow Airport for 3 years, as per the consultation proposal. The regime will run from October 2025 – October 2028.
- 3.48 This means that for the next regime, movement and quota limits for Heathrow Airport during the night quota period (23:30-06:00) will remain the same as they are now.

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<sup>4</sup> [2023-11-30-UK-Business-Survey-Importance-of-Express-Services.pdf \(aices.org\)](https://www.aices.org/2023-11-30-UK-Business-Survey-Importance-of-Express-Services.pdf)



**Table 3: Heathrow Airport movement and QC limits (October 2025 – October 2028)**

		<b>Movement Limit</b>	<b>Noise Quota Limit</b>
Heathrow	Winter	2,550	2,415
	Summer	3,250	2,735

3.49 As announced in the consultation document, the night-time noise abatement objective for the regime to commence in October 2025 will be:

**“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.”**

3.50 We will measure achievement against the night-time noise abatement objective for the 2025-2028 regime by the following metrics:

- the area of and number of people in the 48dB  $L_{Aeq,6.5\text{ hour}}$  hour night<sup>5</sup> contour
- sleep disturbance impacts associated with night flights, assessed using Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG)<sup>6</sup> methodologies
- the average noise of an aircraft (as measured by the average noise Quota Count<sup>7</sup> per aircraft movement over the course of a season)

3.51 Regarding calls to lower the metric for judging success of the night flight regime to the area of and number of people in the 40dB  $L_{Aeq,6.5\text{ hour}}$  night contour (as opposed to the 48dB  $L_{Aeq,6.5\text{ hour}}$  night contour), as we said in the consultation document, we do recognise that some individuals who are outside the 48dB  $L_{Aeq,6.5\text{ hour}}$  night contour will be disturbed by aircraft noise at night. However, it is not possible to accurately produce noise contours for night-time noise below this level. For the purposes of modelling, there is greater uncertainty about where precisely an aircraft will be at these further distances from airports so it is much harder to predict what the sound from an aircraft will be at an exact location.

3.52 The Civil Aviation Authority’s (CAA) model used to create noise contours requires validation from real aircraft noise events, which below these levels are hard to distinguish from other noise sources. We have commissioned the CAA to carry out further work to examine the feasibility of modelling at lower noise levels.

3.53 The 48dB  $L_{Aeq,6.5\text{ hour}}$  contour is therefore used to measure progress over time and assess the impacts of different options for the night flight regime. As required in the

<sup>5</sup>  $L_{Aeq,6.5\text{ hour}}$  night refers to the noise levels in the period of the night 23:30-06:00

<sup>6</sup> Transport Analysis Guidance – the Department for Transport’s suite of guidance on how to assess the expected impacts of transport policy proposals and projects.

<sup>7</sup> The weighting attributed to the arrival or departure of a specified aircraft type by reference to its certified noise performance.

Air Navigation Guidance, our assessment of the health impacts associated with different airspace change options does measure impacts below this – down to 45dB  $L_{Aeq,8 \text{ hour}}$ , which is consistent with the WHO’s Methodological guidance for estimating the burden of disease from environmental noise. The level of accuracy is less critical for this purpose as it is about modelling future options rather than assessing past performance.

- 3.54 Regarding responders who suggested that because of the proposed no significant change to night flights in and out of Heathrow, this meant they did not believe the proposals could fulfil the Government’s stated aim to “where possible reduce” disruption from night flights and improve residents’ lives, we do not accept this view. By holding the movement limit at Heathrow constant for this next regime, while fleet replacement continues to take place and quieter aircraft are introduced, our view is that the night-time noise-abatement objective can be achieved.
- 3.55 As ever with night flights, polarised opinions have been expressed. Once we have evidence from the final reports of the Aviation Night Noise Effects study (ANNE) and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey, we will be able to look again at longer term policy reform in more detail and with more evidence to inform our views on night noise policy going forward, including length of the Night Quota Period, and future night movement and quota limits.
- 3.56 The night flight regime seeks to minimise the environmental impact of night noise, and environmental principles are embedded in our night flight policy, of which this decision is a part.

## 4. The next night flight regime at Gatwick Airport

4.1 In the consultation, we proposed a bridging regime of three years, covering October 2025 to October 2028, while we await further evidence that could support change in the future.

4.2 For the next regime, we proposed that movement and QC limits for Gatwick Airport would remain the same as they are now.

4.3 We asked the following question:

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

4.4 There was general acceptance of the proposal for the bridging regime at Gatwick Airport, however both industry and community responses expressed some disappointment. From the community responses the results anticipated from the ANNE study helped assuage some concerns and industry stakeholders put forward that a similar study should be conducted on the economic benefits of night flights.

4.5 Many individuals responding from local communities described the negative effects of night flight related noise on their sleep, and consequently called for a significant reduction or a ban on flying at Gatwick Airport between 23:00 and 07:00. Within these responses there is the message that sleep is a basic human need and lack of it is degrading to human health leading to negative effects such as depression and lack of concentration.

4.6 Community responses set out that the shoulder periods of 23:00 – 23:30 and 06:00 – 07:00 need noise restrictions as these are the times when people are having lighter sleep and will be more susceptible to noise related awakenings.

4.7 Some of these responses also highlighted that the effects of night noise would increase during summer months as people will be sleeping with their windows open. There were a few responses stating concerns that open windows will also increase exposure to pollution.

- 4.8 Other comments from individuals reasoned that there must be hidden economic costs, to the NHS for example, related to the health effects due to lack of sleep, stress or pollution.
- 4.9 A common theme from residents was that the noise levels and effects of noise did not justify the economic benefits of night flights. They said that flights arriving and departing from Gatwick Airport are for leisure or holidaying purposes and should not take precedence over their quality of life and health.
- 4.10 There were responses in smaller numbers from individuals which stated support of night flights, for reasons such as improving the economy or to help Gatwick Airport grow their flight operations until their proposed expansion.
- 4.11 One respondent said Gatwick Airport handled far less cargo than Heathrow Airport, but Heathrow had many less night flights. They do not believe Gatwick Airport contributes to the economy with their night flights.
- 4.12 Similarly, another resident said that due to Gatwick being a leisure airport and not handling cargo, there is no commitment to consider the balanced approach, and therefore night flights should be decreased in line with health concerns related to lack of sleep.
- 4.13 There were some comparisons made between Gatwick and Heathrow with respondents asking why there are not similar restrictions, for example Heathrow Airport's voluntary ban on arriving aircraft before 04:30 and scheduled arrivals and departures between 22:55 and 04:45, at Gatwick Airport. Some respondents commented on the higher number of night flights at Gatwick than at Heathrow, despite their perception that Heathrow's night flights have greater economic benefits. Local residents who experience sleep disturbances also commented that the rural environment around Gatwick means noise impacts are greater than at Heathrow.
- 4.14 However, there were responses from residents living near Heathrow who proposed that as Gatwick is surrounded by lower density housing area, Gatwick ought to expand and take more night flights. This would relieve the pressure on Heathrow and reduce the night noise related disturbances around Heathrow.
- 4.15 Some respondents had environmental concerns, with one such respondent saying that night flights were "non-essential", and pointed out that banning night flights would also help improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions. One district council stated that night flights caused disturbances to the protected landscapes and habitats in their district, and asked for a deliverable output to reduce the adverse impacts on these invaluable landscapes where tranquillity is a key attribute.
- 4.16 From the community side there were responses which were content with maintaining the current level of restrictions, however they noted that they would not be content with any increases in disturbances. They expressed that some night flight related noise is to be expected when living near an airport but had concerns that growth in the aviation industry would result in greater noise disturbances.
- 4.17 Others agreed that whilst they believed night flights were detrimental to the quality of their life, they were willing to wait for the results of the ANNE study and hope that the

results of this study will help shape subsequent night flight regimes. They understood the Government position to better understand the effects of night noise on sleep.

- 4.18 However other responses including from community groups and local councils, state that there are known harms of night flights and are concerned by the perceived delay in action by Government. They are worried by the length of the proposed bridging regime and believe restrictions should have been made tighter before then.
- 4.19 Although there were local councils responding in agreement with the proposal to maintain Government night flight controls in their current form until we receive results from research (ANNE) currently underway, a large amount feel like more changes could have been made to the night flight restrictions in this consultation.
- 4.20 Local authorities and parish councils generally supported the introduction of a curfew in some form, or at the very least, an extension of the Night Quota Period between 23:00 and 07:00. They commented on the improved noise ratings of aircraft, which allow for more movements within the same QC limit. They reason that movement limits should continue to decrease in line with noise improvements in airlines' aircraft fleet.
- 4.21 Some local councils commented on the carry-over allowances saying that these result in higher summer movements than the proposed Government restrictions. They said the limits in the winter season are too high, which is why Gatwick is able to borrow movements from winter into the summer season. One council said that the carry-over allowance run counter to the Government's objective to mitigate and minimise adverse effects as the winter movement limit does not mitigate aviation noise impacts from night flights.
- 4.22 A local council suggested that carry-over allowances should only be permitted between the same seasons, so a summer excess could roll over to the next summer season. This would help mitigate their concerns that summer movements are too high at Gatwick.
- 4.23 One local council also made the point that Gatwick will be the only airport out of the noise-designated airports to have only Government restrictions for night flights. Heathrow has a voluntary curfew, and Stansted will be subject to an additional night noise control due to local authority planning conditions. Another council also made a comparison to Heathrow, saying that night flight levels at Gatwick should be reduced to a level similar to Heathrow.
- 4.24 Community groups felt let down by the proposed bridging regime and felt that there could have been more restrictions for night flights in the current proposal. They are in favour of banning night flights.
- 4.25 One community group stated their longstanding belief that night flights should be banned for all UK airports during the 8- hour night period, not including emergency or humanitarian flights. However, they make the concession that if night flights are to be permitted, it should be independently demonstrated that they have economic benefits. They would like this proof to be submitted on a route-by-route basis by airports, and until such evidence is provided, Government should make decisions on the standpoint that at Gatwick at least, no such flights are operated.

- 4.26 They expressed the view that the benefits of night flights are only the leisure benefits reaped by a small proportion of society who take night flights, and this is not worth the trade-off for the negative health and community related effects felt by a larger part of society.
- 4.27 If night flights must occur, they reason that there should be regulation to ensure airlines operate the quietest aircraft during the Night Quota Period. This might include changing the pricing of future night slots or reducing the quota limit to encourage airlines to use their least noisy aircraft at night. They also suggest that movement limits should be reduced to around 2,300 which would be closer to Gatwick's "actual" usage.
- 4.28 These sentiments were echoed by other community groups. Additionally, another community group also stated their support of a night flight ban at Gatwick, and reasoned that as Heathrow had a voluntary ban, there is no reason to stop Gatwick from doing the same.
- 4.29 They described night noise as a form of torture used in warfare and reiterate comments that Gatwick is a leisure airport they should not be permitted night flights and as such questioned the government's willingness to allow night flights to continue at Gatwick when they are not bringing in any considerable amounts of cargo.
- 4.30 They expressed the view that dispensations at Gatwick are being 'misused' and called for dispensation guidelines to be tightened. In their view, dispensations should not be permitted for anything other than safety or emergency requirements and they also object to Gatwick taking unused movements from the winter season into the summer season. They state concerns that the current quota limit will also allow growth and therefore increase noise.
- 4.31 Other campaign groups supported these points, and also raised that Gatwick has 3 and a half times the number of Heathrow Summer night flights and has one of the highest numbers within Western Europe. They suggest that concrete steps must be taken to reduce that number substantially year on year and not to continue the current "to limit and where possible reduce" process which has meant in effect no decrease whatsoever. They believe that dispensations and the carry-over scheme has allowed the limit to increase.
- 4.32 The airport consultative committee neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal for Gatwick and stated that there has been no full review of the night flights regime since 2006. They do acknowledge that the results of the ANNE study and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey are important and therefore recognise the need to await the outcomes of these studies before suggesting any changes to the regime. However they welcome the additions the Government has made in the updated guidance limiting the approval of dispensations and would urge a further tightening in the future, reflecting the principle that dispensations should only be granted in exceptional circumstances. They recognise that some members feel that quota rollover from one season to another should not be permitted.
- 4.33 Amongst the responses from industry, there was support of the bridging regime of the current restriction limits. They understood the importance of completing the

research underway and there was also general recognition of noise impacts on communities.

- 4.34 Industry responses cited the continued improvement in noise ratings on modern aircraft abating concerns raised by communities and also included comment that movement limits do not incentivise airlines to invest in quieter aircraft.
- 4.35 They proposed moving to a QC limit approach, which they state would also support the future growth of Gatwick Airport. Movement limits do not incentivise airlines to invest in quieter aircraft. In contrast, the QC system is designed to limit noisier aircraft. A transition to a QC system should be seen as an opportunity to facilitate sustainable growth while minimising or decreasing aviation noise for local communities.
- 4.36 Industry responses also suggested that the next regime to be decided after the one being consulted on should have longer cycles, potentially 10 years. This would provide a more sustainable and predictable regulatory environment, aligning with airlines' long-term planning and fleet renewal cycles.
- 4.37 One industry stakeholder raised concerns that limiting night flights could lead to a decrease in flight frequency, potentially resulting in reduced customer satisfaction and demand. This, in turn, could have negative impacts on flight operations and the direct and indirect employment the aviation industry provides to local communities. Additionally, this could lead to fewer choices and higher fares for consumers.
- 4.38 They also stated that there are other more effective ways to minimise noise for local communities than introducing operational restrictions. They suggest that focus should remain on finalising the ongoing UK airspace modernisation programme. The way the airspace is currently designed means that airlines use routings designed in the 1950s for aircraft which were much less capable, therefore not utilising the modern aircraft capabilities.
- 4.39 One industry stakeholder described the need for night flights during the shoulder period stating that due to the nature of Gatwick traffic they have a high proportion of based short-haul aircraft, and the airport is capacity-constrained at the very start and end of the day when there is strong demand for early departures and late arrivals of the based-aircraft. They require multiple rotations throughout the day and the early morning departures and late arrivals help facilitate airlines' business models operating from Gatwick.
- 4.40 They express that Gatwick has measures in place to mitigate noise concerns from local communities, including the scheme of charges with noise charges significantly higher during the night period.
- 4.41 They ask the Government to holistically consider the night flight operations at Gatwick against community concerns. They put forward that the numbers of passengers travelling via Gatwick count as economic benefits with the number of passengers benefitting from night flights at Gatwick in 2019 at 3.2 million. Of these, approximately 63% would be on their first flight and 15% would be on their second or third flight within the last 12 months. Using CAA passenger survey data from 2019, it can be deduced that approximately 2.1 million individual passengers benefited from

night flights at the airport in 2019, compared to the population of 12,200 people who lived within the summer 8-hour night 48 dBA Leq contour at that time.

## Government response

4.42 Having taken into account the responses received to the consultation, the Government intends to proceed with a bridging night flight regime at Gatwick Airport for 3 years, as per the consultation proposal. The regime will run from October 2025 – October 2028.

4.43 This means that for the next regime, movement and quota limits for Gatwick Airport during the night quota period (23:30 – 06:00) will remain the same as they are now.

**Table 4: Gatwick Airport’s movement and QC limits (October 2025 – October 2028)**

		Movement Limit	Noise Quota Limit
Gatwick	Winter	3,250	1,785
	Summer	11,200	5,150

4.44 As announced in the consultation document, the night-time noise abatement objective for the regime to commence in October 2025 will be:

**“To limit and where possible reduce, the adverse effects of aviation noise at night on health and quality of life, whilst supporting sustainable growth and recognising the importance to the UK of commercial passenger and freight services.”**

4.45 We will measure achievement against the night-time noise abatement objective for the 2025-2028 regime by the following metrics:

- the area of and number of people in the 48dB  $L_{Aeq,6.5\text{ hour}}$  night<sup>8</sup> contour
- sleep disturbance impacts associated with night flights, assessed using Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG)<sup>9</sup> methodologies
- the average noise of an aircraft (as measured by the average noise Quota Count<sup>10</sup> per aircraft movement over the course of a season)

<sup>8</sup>  $L_{Aeq,6.5\text{ hour}}$  night refers to the noise levels in the period of the night 23:30-06:00

<sup>9</sup> Transport Analysis Guidance – the Department for Transport’s suite of guidance on how to assess the expected impacts of transport policy proposals and projects.

<sup>10</sup> The weighting attributed to the arrival or departure of a specified aircraft type by reference to its certified noise performance.



- 4.46 As ever with night flights, polarised opinions have been expressed. Once we have evidence from the final reports of the Aviation Night Noise Effects study (ANNE) and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey, we will be able to look again at longer term policy reform in more detail and with more evidence to inform our views on night noise policy going forward, including length of the Night Quota Period, and future night movement and quota limits.
- 4.47 In response to those community responses from Gatwick residents which suggested that the Government implements a curfew at Heathrow but not at Gatwick, this is a misunderstanding. All three noise designated airports are 24 hour airports, and the Government does impose any periods of closure at either Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted. Nor does the Government prevent operations at any time of night, other than for QC4, QC8 or QC16 rated aircraft.
- 4.48 The night flight regime seeks to minimise the environmental impact of night noise, and environmental principles are embedded in our night flight policy, of which this decision is a part.

## 5. The next night flight regime at Stansted Airport

- 5.1 In the consultation, we recognised there has been a material change in circumstances at Stansted Airport following planning permission granted in June 2021 for the airport to serve up to 43 million passengers per year (within the airport's existing annual movement limit of 274,000). A planning condition has imposed a night noise limit on operations at Stansted for the 8-hour night period (23:00-07:00).
- 5.2 The noise limit condition imposed as a planning condition is expressed as a night noise contour. It requires that the area enclosed by the night noise contour (48dB  $L_{Aeq,8 \text{ hour}}$ ) be no more than 74km<sup>2</sup>. The new limit will be legally binding once the airport reaches a passenger throughput of 35 million passengers per annum.
- 5.3 A draft Noise Action Plan for Stansted Airport for 2024-2028, proposed to introduce a new 8-hour night Quota Count (QC) limit for the summer 2026 season, to meet the planning condition. The draft Noise Action Plan also stated that if it were helpful to deliver a streamlined but comprehensive system of controls, the airport would be content to extend the QC limit to cover the Winter season too. This is important as the existing government controls on night flights at Stansted run to October 2025.
- 5.4 The consultation invited opinion on three different options for Stansted:
- **Option 1** – Place reliance on the planning condition and Stansted's introduction of an 8-hour night QC limit for the summer season of 2026. At this point, government night controls would then be removed.
  - **Option 2** – The same as Option 1, but with Stansted also introducing an 8-hour night QC limit for the Winter season 2025 to 2026. At the start of the Winter 2025 to 2026 season, government night controls would then be removed: when the current night flight regime comes to an end.
  - **Option 3** – Government controls for the night quota period remain, to run alongside Stansted's new QC limit for summer 2026. Government night controls would continue.

- 5.5 In the consultation, we proposed a bridging regime of three years, covering October 2025 to October 2028. This proposal to keep current night flight restrictions the same in a bridging regime, is Option 3 of the options outlined above.
- 5.6 For the next regime, we proposed that movement and QC limits for Stansted Airport would remain the same as they are now.
- 5.7 We asked the following questions:

**To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with Option 1 for the next night flight regime at Stansted Airport? Please provide evidence to support your view.**

**To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with Option 2 for the next night flight regime at Stansted Airport? Please provide evidence to support your view.**

**To what extent do you agree, or disagree, with Option 3 for the next night flight regime at Stansted Airport? Please provide evidence to support your view.**

- 5.8 From local community responses, we received a very strong response opposed to both Options 1 and 2, which communities said they believe would lead to many more night flights if Quota Count (QC) alone were to be the control mechanism.
- 5.9 The over-riding message received from concerned residents of Stansted was that residents want fewer night flights rather than more. Night flights at Stansted were described as being intrusive, disruptive and having very negative effects on physical and mental health.
- 5.10 The majority of individuals expressed support for Option 3 (even though many also described this as the 'least-worse' option of those offered, and commented that they would prefer that steps be taken to reduce and ultimately ban night flights altogether). A common theme from residents was that Government-set night flight controls were an essential protection to local residents from night noise, with concerns expressed about reliance on the planning regime to control future restrictions.
- 5.11 Concerns were raised by local residents about the ability of the local authority to monitor and enforce the new QC control, with some expressing the view that the local authority was not suitably resourced in order to carry out this function, with some also questioning whether it had the skills or expertise required.
- 5.12 An environmental campaign group also questioned the effectiveness of the planning system as a means of controlling aviation noise impacts, and referred to airports that have breached planning conditions and then either sought retrospective change, or who have challenged under-resourced (and in some cases conflicted) planning authorities to take enforcement action.
- 5.13 A local campaign group organised a template response, which featured heavily in responses received, and which called for a phasing out of night flights by 2030 (except for emergencies), and for 'night to mean night' i.e. an extension of the Night Quota Period. Many other individual respondents were also of the view that the Government-set night flight restrictions on movement and quota limits should also cover the 8-hour night period (23:00-07:00), with these hours described as being a

reasonable period to expect peace and quiet, so as to encourage a healthy night's sleep.

- 5.14 Some respondents from the Stansted area noted that Stansted is currently permitted to have 13,700 night flights per year, in the 6.5 hour core night period (23:30-06:00) but Heathrow only 5,800. They were of the view that both the airport management and the airlines have taken full advantage of this and said they expected that any further liberalisation would almost certainly be exploited in full.
- 5.15 A theme expressed by some Stansted local residents was that current night flight restrictions work, albeit imperfectly, and if they cannot be strengthened, they should at least be maintained.
- 5.16 Local residents around Stansted Airport were keen to point out that aircraft noise in an otherwise tranquil countryside around the airport was even more prominent, as they believe that sound travels further with low ambient noise levels. A common view from residents was that noise from night flights at Stansted is bad enough at the moment, with a corresponding impact on sleep disturbance, which impacts on health, both mental and physical, and that it would be unfair to locals to add still more night flights. Options 1 and 2 were commonly perceived by communities as amounting to a weakening or a relaxation of current night flight controls, which would inevitably lead to more night flights.
- 5.17 One local resident said that they generally do not mind too much about daytime aviation noise, as this is to be expected living close to any international airport. However, they went on to say that like most people, they need to get 8 hours of sleep at night for health and well-being. They stated that unfortunately, even the quieter aircraft can wake them up, whilst some aircraft were described as being very disturbing at night.
- 5.18 Some residents expressed the view that an agreement already in place with Uttlesford District Council since 2003, states that Stansted Airport would not seek any relaxation of the night flight restrictions currently in force for the night period, or for the night quota period. These residents were of the view that Options 1 and 2 would be a relaxation of the existing controls, which in their view would be intolerable.
- 5.19 A local campaign group noted that in the absence of a movement limit, one night flight by a QC2 rated aircraft could be replaced by up to 16 night flights by QC0.125 rated aircraft, and they described this as wholly unjust for local residents, giving the view that all aircraft are inherently noisy, and it is the frequency of noise events that can ruin sleep. Another example offered by a Parish council was that an allowance of 150 QC points per week, would allow 75 night flights by the noisiest aircraft (QC2), or up to 1,200 night flights by less noisy aircraft (QC0.125).
- 5.20 A common feeling expressed was that to abandon Government-set night flight restrictions before the Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE) study outcome is known, could be deemed to be irresponsible.
- 5.21 A number of respondents also referred to a significant level of new housing development in the areas surrounding Stansted Airport and offered the view that

complaints about aviation noise could be expected to grow if additional night flights were to be allowed.

- 5.22 Residents spoke of needing to have windows open at night during hot weather, and some also referred to the large number of old listed buildings in their area which are not permitted to fit double-glazing to cut out aircraft noise.
- 5.23 Of particular concern to some local respondents were the cargo aircraft currently operating at Stansted, which were described as being extremely noisy. A response from a Town Council also expressed the view that cargo flights cause greater noise disruption than passenger flights.
- 5.24 An environmental campaign group gave the opinion that in no circumstances should night flights at any airport be managed through a QC limit only. They gave the view that QC limits on their own are not effective in controlling night noise, and that setting limits by reference to QC ratings only, would permit very substantial increases in night movements as aircraft become less noisy by increments that are not perceptible to human beings. They added that it was the frequency of aircraft noise events which is the more significant factor for many people rather than the individual noisiness of those events.
- 5.25 They gave the view that if any night flights are to be permitted, these should be limited to those that have been independently demonstrated to be essential for economic reasons. They added that given the known harms caused by night flights there should be a presumption against their operation unless an airport can provide conclusive evidence of very substantial economic benefits on a route-by-route basis.
- 5.26 This environmental campaign group also called for the winter movement limit at Stansted to be reduced to around 3,000 movements (down from the current 5,600 movements), explaining that at present the excess movement limit provides headroom for the airport to exceed its summer limit by carrying over unused winter allowance into the summer period.
- 5.27 Local authorities and parish councils were united in expressing strong opposition to Options 1 and 2, and stating support for Option 3. A common theme from local authority responses argued that current controls should remain in place until the ANNE study and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey outcomes have been delivered and thoroughly assessed.
- 5.28 Uttlesford District Council made the point that the 2021 planning permission controls only come into force once Stansted Airport reaches a passenger throughput of 35 million passengers per annum (mppa). They believed this figure is currently at around 28 mppa and in the view of the Council is not likely to reach 35 mppa until the airport terminal is expanded, which the Council said is likely to be in 2027. They were therefore of the opinion that without Government-set night flight controls, there could be no controls between 2025 and 2027, which they described as unacceptable.
- 5.29 The Council also offered their view that that the Planning Inspector's decision, when granting the planning permission, was for both sets of controls to apply, the Government-set night flight controls and the new 8-hour QC control. A local

campaign group also argued that the Inspectors made clear the new control should sit alongside rather than replace the Government's night flight restrictions.

5.30 This local campaign group referred to a planning decision letter dated 21 June 2021, in support of their view that in imposing planning condition 7, the Panel of Inspectors made clear that this condition should sit alongside the Government's night flight restrictions:

*“However, the night flight restrictions do not cover the full 8 hour period used in the LAeq assessment. Consequently, if only the night flight restrictions were to be relied upon, there would be no control of aircraft noise between 23:00 and 23:30 hours and between 06:00 and 07:00 hours. The ESA3 has demonstrated that the reductions in night noise would be beneficial to health. For these reasons, inclusion of the LAeq 8hour restriction in condition 7 would be necessary. **In coming to this view, the Panel has taken into account the dual restrictions that would apply.** However, the night noise contour requirement in condition 7 would be necessary to secure the benefit and it has not been demonstrated that the night noise restrictions would be sufficient in this respect.”<sup>11</sup>*

5.31 Uttlesford District Council went on to say that Option 1 would mean that enforcement of the night flight regime (once the planning permission condition comes into force) would fall solely on the Council's small Planning Enforcement team. The Council said that it is widely acknowledged that the planning enforcement process can be protracted and cumbersome and any breaches that might arise may take longer to resolve.

5.32 The Council response spoke of concern of local communities about the complete removal of a movement limit, as residents currently value the certainty about the total number of movements over any given night flying year. They added that night noise disturbance arises from all aircraft activity, irrespective of the noise quota level applicable to any given aircraft.

5.33 The Council closed by expressing their preference for Option 3, offering the view that the current regime permits a coordinated view to be taken concerning applicable policy as to operations at all three principal London airports, and which in their view, extends beyond the scope and limitations of local planning permissions. In the view of the Council, Option 3 is the only one of the options that would maintain needed protections for local residents. This was a common feeling expressed in many local authority responses.

5.34 Another County Council echoed concerns regarding the complete removal of a movement limit for local communities, and expressed support for Option 3, stating that with the outcomes from the ANNE study and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey remaining outstanding, it would be premature to remove existing Government-set controls on movement limits.

5.35 Other local authorities also gave their view that Government-set night flight restrictions at Stansted remain necessary, and spoke of the uncertainty which

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<sup>11</sup> Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/20/3256619 (43mppa Inquiry), Panel of Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State, Decision Letter dated 21 June 2021, paragraph 44.

Options 1 and 2 would mean for residents in regard to the number of night flights. Parish Council responses spoke of residents fearing an unacceptable escalation of night flying, which would have a corresponding impact on their health and well-being.

- 5.36 A local campaign group expressed concern that Stansted's controls in their Noise Action Plan are not legally enforceable, which they regarded as a further argument for Government controls to remain. This view was shared by a local Parish Council who noted that whilst Noise Action Plans contain targets, objectives and aspirations, they are not legally enforceable.
- 5.37 There were a small number of responses from individual members of the public around Stansted who said that increases to capacity were vital for growth, and which recognised the contribution which night flights at Stansted make to the UK economy.
- 5.38 A small number of responses also spoke in favour of the employment which the airport provides for local people, and recognised that modern aircraft make less noise than older aircraft. However, this type of response was heavily outweighed by responses from local communities who spoke of the disruption caused by current night flights and expressed a wish for this to improve, or at the very least, not to get any worse.
- 5.39 Responses from industry were clear to stress that night flights play a critical role in supporting commercial airline operations and in facilitating international trade, with UK wide social and economic benefits.
- 5.40 A general view expressed by industry was that the bridging regime period as proposed, represented a missed opportunity to positively consider moving from the current night flight regime based on arbitrary movement limits to a QC based system. It was said that this would explicitly recognise that with the further advances in technology and the introduction of the next generation of quieter aircraft, as well as initiatives ongoing or being considered to mitigate the impacts to local communities, there should be opportunity for a further upward increase in aircraft movements, whilst limiting or reducing the noise impacts and providing additional economic value in a controlled manner.
- 5.41 Another industry response noted that investment in the latest generation of aircraft engines and airframes is ongoing, yet as things stand, the current regime does not reward improvements made in noise performance with any opportunities for growth. This point of view was supported by another industry response who argued too that managing night flights through a QC limit alone would be most effective in incentivising the deployment of quieter aircraft.
- 5.42 Options 1 and 2 did receive some support from industry responses, one of which said that the practical implementation of two separate quota limits would bring an obvious operational difficulty and burden, and would make planning very complicated for the airport operator and the carriers. Another airline in favour of Option 1 supported the idea of moving to a planning-condition based scheme. Given the advent of quieter, next generation aircraft, this responder felt that Option 1 would allow airlines to maximise the efficiency and utilisation of these investments, not only to better serve the travelling public, but also to ensure that schedules are planned accordingly using the quietest aircraft.

- 5.43 Another airline, in favour of Option 2, said that the idea of having night operations purely controlled based on QC rating is attractive and preferable to them, and argued that this would encourage investment in newer aircraft, which would reduce the noise levels of individual operations. They described a movement limit as restrictive and a blunt instrument. This airline added that the importance of the ability to operate at night has increased, as consumers look for lower fares which often are delivered through maximising utilisation of aircraft that requires operation at most times of the day. They also referred to the consumer market for goods being delivered quickly (and often next day), saying that a transportation infrastructure that can move goods overnight is often necessary in order to achieve those expectations.
- 5.44 Another airline in support of Option 2 said they did not believe there is a need for two sets of night-time controls. They said the introduction of a night noise limitation for an 8-hour night period expressed as a night noise contour, is a positive step in linking policy to the noise being experienced.
- 5.45 An airline in support of Option 2, gave the view that a QC control effectively targets the problem which the Government is trying to address, namely noise nuisance, rather than the activity, flights, that generate beneficial social and economic effects. This airline said that Option 2 would incentivise them and others to base their most efficient, environmentally friendly and quietest aircraft at Stansted.
- 5.46 This response described movement controls as outdated, unnecessary and counterproductive. It gave the view that the night movement control fails to incentivise airlines to allocate their quietest, most environmentally friendly aircraft to Stansted. They said that as Stansted Airport has largely reached its movement cap, there is no incentive for an airline to transition an existing night-time movement from being operated by an older, noisier aircraft with higher emissions to a newer, quieter aircraft with lower emissions. As a result, this response gave the view that the night-time movement cap is harming the interests of local residents living close to Stansted Airport, the very people the night-time noise restrictions are meant to protect.
- 5.47 The response also called for the Stansted noise quota to be increased, giving the view that under existing restrictions there is essentially no remaining capacity to operate during the night at any of London's major airports, which was described as an impediment to the UK's economic growth. The response was also supportive of the prohibition of night-time movements on QC1 or higher rated aircraft at Stansted.
- 5.48 Manchester Airports Group (MAG) gave its support for Option 2. It said the control framework at Stansted, adopted through the planning system is widely adopted by other UK airports, and has been shown to work well in other settings, for example at Manchester Airport and at East Midlands Airport. It said that should the Government proceed with Option 2, it would work with stakeholders to amend the airport's Noise Action Plan to incorporate a winter QC limit, which would take effect from October 2025.
- 5.49 MAG said with the implementation of a QC limit to meet the requirements of the planning condition, coupled with a suite of noise controls set out in the airport's Noise Action Plan (including substantial investment in a new Sound Insulation Grant Scheme), there is a comprehensive noise management framework in place, which it believes provides an effective system of control.



- 5.50 MAG said if the Government were minded to choose Option 3, it would be necessary to set out the basis for imposing two regulatory regimes to manage the same impacts. At a practical level it said this would be administratively burdensome and could be confusing for customers and other stakeholders. Another response from industry also feared that a dual control system could result in increased complexity and administrative burdens in planning flight schedules, and could lead to reduced global connectivity.
- 5.51 MAG does not share the view that the planning inquiry saw the two sets of controls (the planning condition and Government-set night flight restrictions) working together. It is MAG's view that the Government-set limits on aircraft movements and quota for the 6.5 hour period led to a conclusion that there would be no control on noise at the start and end of the night period and that another control, in the form of the Planning Condition, was necessary.
- 5.52 MAG added that, importantly, the Planning Condition covers the whole 8-hour night period and is therefore, in their view, an entirely separate and additional control rather than one that compliments the existing restrictions.
- 5.53 A common response from freight carriers was that they had reviewed the proposals for Stansted and did not believe that any of these provide the opportunity for growth for all-cargo airlines. Freight carriers reiterated that the most pressing need for the express freight industry is the lack of capacity within the night period, specifically at airports in the South-East.
- 5.54 Flying overnight was described as an operational necessity for the express freight sector, as it allows pick up at the end of a working day and a guaranteed delivery on the next possible working day, increasing productivity for UK businesses and supporting economic growth and global trade. This response said that it is critical that operations of QC2 rated aircraft for cargo operators are protected during the night period, and that this should not be a matter left to the airport coordination committee, where freight carriers were described as being consistently outvoted. This response said that whichever option is taken forward at Stansted, it should be accompanied by a suite of measures to ensure that all cargo operators can acquire the small number of critically important slots they require both on a historic and ad hoc basis during the night period.
- 5.55 Express air cargo was described as key to the supply chain, enabling UK businesses, especially in the hi-tech, retail, pharmaceutical and healthcare industries to send and receive just-in-time deliveries. These responses argued that protecting express air freight is critical to economic growth and keeping UK businesses competitive in a 24-hour global economy.
- 5.56 A response from an express freight carrier gave the view that Options 1 and 2 seem to offer growth potential only to the passenger carriers, which have the potential to sub-divide existing QC allocations and have access to functionally unlimited ATMs to support introduction of new services. This responder noted that unlike passenger aircraft, all-cargo operators face restrictive limitations on ATMs that would restrict their growth even if lower QC aircraft were to become available, and spoke of the lack of market availability of lower QC rated aircraft for cargo services. Looking at the totality of the circumstances, they described Option 3 as the least harmful option.

- 5.57 Another response from an express freight carrier, also supported the continuation of Government controls at Stansted. In the view of this response, key airports, including Stansted, should be recognised as strategic national infrastructure and have Government oversight to prevent local policy decisions, on noise and beyond, being taken which do not support national policy objectives. In the absence of such a mechanism, at this stage this responder did not believe the Government should remove the noise controls currently imposed. The response called for further work by Government to identify airports of strategic national importance to ensure local decisions do not impede national policy.
- 5.58 Another industry response, whilst supportive of a single regime to manage the impact of night operations, gave the view that on face value, unlimited movements seem counter intuitive to the aims of the night-time noise abatement objective. This responder agreed with Option 3, saying whilst it may not be necessary or desirable to have two night-regimes running in parallel, it seems prudent to do so until the Stansted 8-hour QC limit is in operation.

## Government response

- 5.59 The Government recognises that quite different opinions have been expressed, with particularly strong feeling from local communities around Stansted who fear increased night flights resulting from Options 1 and 2, whilst some industry responses have spoken in support of these same options.
- 5.60 The Government preference put forward in the consultation document was for Option 3, for Government-set night flight controls to remain, with a view to continuing to protect local communities. This option was supported by an overwhelming number of community respondents, plus some from industry and freight operators. Most industry responses supported other options, however, those responses have not persuaded us to change our view, whilst we await the results from the ANNE study.
- 5.61 We have heard this strong level of opposition from local communities and from local authorities who do not wish to see Government-set night flight restrictions removed at Stansted, amid fears that this would result in an increased number of night flights. Particular concern was the removal of a movement limit with some respondents saying that instances of disturbance rather than overall noise was a significant factor.
- 5.62 While we recognise that control via local planning conditions works at other airports, and could work at Stansted in the future, we are aware that the Planning Inspector noted that the aircraft movement and QC limits imposed by Government are restricted to the 6.5-hour night quota period (between 23:30-06:00). To provide local communities with greater protection from aircraft noise, the Planning Inspector imposed a night noise limit on operations at Stansted for the 8-hour night period (between 23:00-07:00). The decision did not consider movement limits or their impact as this was outside the scope of its determination. It did note however that the two controls would exist together.

5.63 Paragraph 44 of the Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision<sup>12</sup>, dated 26 May 2021, reads as follows:

*“However, the night flight restrictions do not cover the full 8 hour period used in the LAeq assessment. Consequently, if only the night flight restrictions were to be relied upon, there would be no control of aircraft noise between 23:00 and 23:30 hours and between 06:00 and 07:00 hours. The ESA has demonstrated that the reductions in night noise would be beneficial to health. For these reasons, inclusion of the LAeq 8hour restriction in condition 7 would be necessary. In coming to this view, the Panel has taken into account the dual restrictions that would apply. However, the night noise contour requirement in condition 7 would be necessary to secure the benefit and it has not been demonstrated that the night noise restrictions would be sufficient in this respect.”*

5.64 As the new QC limit proposed at Stansted applies to the 8-hour night period (23:00–07:00) and not the 6.5 hour night quota period (23:30–06:00), this means that in the absence of a Government-set movement limit, flights currently scheduled between 23:00-23:30 and 06:00-07:00 could be moved into the night quota period (23:30-06:00), and could potentially be clustered in the middle of the night, therefore leading to a potentially worse outcome in the core night hours than currently exists.

5.65 Pending the results of the Aviation Night Noise Effects (ANNE) study we do not currently have evidence to assess the impact of such a change. At this present moment, it seems premature to remove the Government-set night flight controls at Stansted.

5.66 Therefore, on balance, we have reached a decision in favour of Option 3 at Stansted, for Government-set night flight restrictions to continue.

5.67 The Government intends to proceed with a bridging night flight regime at Stansted Airport for 3 years, as per the consultation proposal. The regime will run from October 2025 – October 2028.

5.68 This means that for the next regime, movement and quota limits for Stansted Airport during the night quota period (23:30–06:00) will remain the same as they are now, while we await evidence that could support future change.

**Table 5: Stansted Airport movement and QC limits (October 2025 – October 2028)**

		<b>Movement Limit</b>	<b>Noise Quota Limit</b>
Stansted	Winter	5,600	3,310
	Summer	8,100	4,650

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10878/Decision-letter-Stansted-Airport-Appeal/pdf/Appeal\\_Decision\\_-\\_3256619A.pdf?m=1622040655847](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/10878/Decision-letter-Stansted-Airport-Appeal/pdf/Appeal_Decision_-_3256619A.pdf?m=1622040655847)

5.69 As announced in the consultation document, the night-time noise abatement objective for the regime to commence in October 2025 will be:

**“To limit and where possible reduce, the adverse effects of aviation noise at night on health and quality of life, whilst supporting sustainable growth and recognising the importance to the UK of commercial passenger and freight services.”**

5.70 We will measure achievement against the night-time noise abatement objective for the 2025-2028 regime by the following metrics:

- the area of and number of people in the 48dB  $L_{Aeq,6.5 \text{ hour}}$  night<sup>13</sup> contour
- sleep disturbance impacts associated with night flights, assessed using Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG)<sup>14</sup> methodologies
- the average noise of an aircraft (as measured by the average noise Quota Count<sup>15</sup> per aircraft movement over the course of a season)

5.71 Once we have evidence from the final reports of the Aviation Night Noise Effects study (ANNE) and the Aviation Noise Attitudes Survey, we will look again at longer term policy reform, including length of the Night Quota Period, and future night movement and quota limits.

5.72 Consideration of the question regarding airport designation, and whether Stansted (which has been designated for the purposes of noise since 1971) should continue to remain designated, will be picked up as part of wider ongoing noise policy work.

5.73 We note the challenge from MAG that Government has not considered whether it remains appropriate for the Secretary of State for Transport to continue to designate Stansted Airport. However, it is not appropriate to consider designation status within a night flight consultation, when designation covers broader issues, including noise abatement procedures and other noise related operating restrictions.

5.74 The night flight regime seeks to minimise the environmental impact of night noise, and environmental principles are embedded in our night flight policy, of which this decision is a part.

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<sup>13</sup>  $L_{Aeq,6.5 \text{ hour}}$  night refers to the noise levels in the period of the night 23:30-06:00

<sup>14</sup> Transport Analysis Guidance – the Department for Transport’s suite of guidance on how to assess the expected impacts of transport policy proposals and projects.

<sup>15</sup> The weighting attributed to the arrival or departure of a specified aircraft type by reference to its certified noise performance.

## 6. Other issues raised in responses – not directly related to this consultation

- 6.1 A common theme across responses from local communities, particularly around Stansted and Gatwick, concerned the number of night flight dispensations being recorded. We heard from a local council in the Gatwick area who disagreed with dispensations being permitted for events which happen every year, which they described as known causes, and which can be predicted to occur every summer, for example, weather related delays and Air Traffic Control disruption through strikes. A Parish council in the Gatwick area asked the Department to objectively review the dispensations granted at Gatwick for night flights to principally leisure flight operators, to establish if any airline has created a recognisable pattern of requests for night flight dispensations to ensure optimum utilisation of their aircraft to maximise their commercial interests.
- 6.2 Responses from residents local to Stansted frequently made the call for the Government to 'dispense with Dispensations', arguing that the right of airport managers to grant dispensations should be removed. A common theme suggested that the dispensation process seems relatively unaccountable and in need of far stricter external oversight, with a Parish Council giving the view that the airport authority should not be self-regulating in this regard.
- 6.3 A Parish Council in the Stansted area acknowledged that there must be a system to allow late arrivals due to unforeseen conditions or emergencies, however, the response suggested that these must be rigorously, and independently enforced. The Parish Council questioned quite how effectively this is currently being enforced at Stansted as dispensations permitted for Summer 2023 were three times the number at Heathrow (1,471 at Stansted; 462 at Heathrow; 1,293 at Gatwick).
- 6.4 Another common theme across individual responses was a reference to climate change, along with suggestions that a major way to reduce carbon emissions is for people to fly less.
- 6.5 Responses called for flying to either be decreased or curtailed in general due to its contribution to global warming, and in this regard the banning of night flights was suggested as a step in the right direction in the Government's commitment to Net Zero. Another resident suggested promoting rail travel would be a better way to boost the economy whilst tackling climate change at the same time.

- 6.6 Some respondents local to Stansted made the point that climate change is something which cannot be ignored, and suggested Stansted Airport should be looking at ways to mitigate its impact on the wider and global environment. The view was expressed that extra flights is not the way to do this and particularly not at night. Others said that in the face of increasingly turbulent weather resulting from climate change the suggestion of increasing the number of Stansted flights is shortsighted and would not benefit individuals or the country in the long term.
- 6.7 Economic growth was described as an irrelevant metric by a resident who expressed the view that the world is facing catastrophic climate change.

## Government response

- 6.8 We have recently reviewed night flight dispensation data, and published updated guidance around night flight dispensations in February 2024.
- 6.9 We have also added a requirement for the noise-designated airports to write a letter to the Secretary of State within one month of a season ending, and setting out detail on dispensations, including why those dispensations have been approved and why they have reasons which are considered to be 'extraordinary'. The letters should also offer consideration of whether similar such reasons should be classed as 'extraordinary' if they occurred again the following year.
- 6.10 These letters are to be published by the airports, and the first letters will outline dispensations during the Summer 2024 season.
- 6.11 We undertake regular reviews to monitor and assess compliance around dispensations, as well as to identify opportunities to further improve the dispensation process.
- 6.12 The Government needs to achieve a fair balance between the positive and negative impacts of night flights and does recognise and value the importance of the resilience of the three noise-designated airports. The current dispensation systems offers an important tool in facilitating schedule recovery after extenuating circumstances have disrupted operations.
- 6.13 As we said in the consultation document, if the current night-flight dispensation process were not in place, there would be more cancelled and re-scheduled flights. This would result in hardship to passengers who may have to be accommodated in airport hotels at short notice or may face being diverted to airports where they had not expected to arrive, with the knock-on effects of that aircraft then being out of position. There could be significant additional costs to airlines and considerable ramifications for the carrying of time-sensitive freight. In the case of deciding that a long-haul flight cannot depart, it may not be possible for the flight to leave until 24 hours later due to consideration around the operating hours of the crew, and consideration of any arrival restrictions that may be in place at the destination.
- 6.14 The UK was the first country to establish a long term, legally binding framework to cut carbon emissions to tackle climate change through its 2008 Climate Change Act,

which has set a legally binding requirement for the UK to reduce its carbon emissions by 100% of 1990 levels (or net zero) by 2050.

- 6.15 This government is also committed to securing the long-term future of the aviation sector in the UK, by taking action to reduce carbon emissions such as support for domestic sustainable aviation fuel production, and by encouraging airspace modernisation.
- 6.16 On 17 July 2024 in the King's Speech, it was announced that a sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) revenue certainty mechanism bill will be introduced which will provide further reassurance about future revenues and drive investment in SAF production in the UK. Furthermore, we will introduce a SAF mandate to start from 1 January 2025 which will drive the demand for SAF in the UK, reaching 22% of total jet fuel demand in 2040.
- 6.17 We continue to encourage airspace modernisation, and the decarbonisation benefits this brings. We are committed to the UK Airspace Modernisation programme, which is driving the aviation sector towards a strong and sustainable future. The proposed changes aim to make it easier for aircraft to fly more direct routes, with better climb and descent profiles to and from energy-efficient cruising altitudes to help reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and aircraft noise. The environmental benefits of airspace modernisation will contribute towards our emissions reductions targets for the aviation sector, and we have already made good progress. NATS estimates that the Free Route Airspace deployment over the southwest of England in March 2023 saves up to 12,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>/year and 150,000 nautical miles of flying, which is equivalent to nearly seven trips around the world.

## 7. Glossary

<b>Balanced Approach</b>	Guidance developed by ICAO to address aircraft noise problems at individual airports in an environmentally responsive and economically responsible way
<b>CAA</b>	Civil Aviation Authority
<b>dB</b>	Unit of relative sound level or changes in sound level
<b>dBA</b>	Unit of sound pressure level measured on the A weighted scale, i.e. as measured on an instrument that applies a weighting to the electrical signal as a way of simulating the way a typical human ear responds to a range of acoustic frequencies.
<b>Designated airport</b>	Any airport designated for the purposes of section 78 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 which allows the Secretary of State to require action to be taken to avoid, limit or mitigate the effect of noise from aircraft. Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted are the three airports currently designated for these purposes
<b>ICAO</b>	International Civil Aviation Organisation.



<b>L<sub>eq</sub></b>	A measure of long term average noise exposure. For aircraft it is the level of a steady sound which, if heard continuously over the same period of time, would contain the same total sound energy as all the aircraft noise events. L <sub>eq</sub> is most commonly used with the A-weighted scale (as measured on an instrument that applies a weighting to the electrical signal as a way of simulating the way a typical human ear responds to a range of acoustic frequencies), expressed as L <sub>Aeq</sub> . L <sub>Aeq 6.5hr night</sub> is used in this consultation to refer to the noise levels in the period of the night, 23:30-06:00, that movement and noise quota limits apply to.
<b>L<sub>night</sub></b>	Usually, the eight hour L <sub>eq</sub> average noise level from a specified source or sources as defined in Directive 2002/49/EC, in the UK defined to cover 23:00-07:00 local time; sometimes defined over other periods at night.
<b>Movement Limit</b>	The number of movements allowed during a season between 23:30 and 06:00 (the Night Quota Period).
<b>Noise Contour</b>	Aircraft noise maps which show lines joining points of equal noise to illustrate the impact of aircraft noise around airports.
<b>Night Period</b>	Defined as 23:00-07:00 local time.
<b>Night Quota Period</b>	Defined as 23:30-06:00 local time unless the context indicates otherwise.
<b>Noise Quota</b>	An aggregation of quota count for individual aircraft, used to define a seasonal limit or usage by comparison with the applicable limit.

**Operating Restriction**

Noise related action that limits or reduces access of civil subsonic jet aeroplanes to an airport. It includes operating restrictions aimed at the withdrawal from operations of marginally compliant aircraft at specific airports as well as operating restrictions of a partial nature, affecting the operation of civil subsonic aeroplanes according to time period

**Quota Count (or QC)**

The weighting attributed to the arrival or departure of a specified aircraft type by reference to its certificated noise performance, divided into 3EPNdB bands. Effective Perceived Noise Decibels (EPNdB) are a specialised noise unit used for aircraft noise certification tests.

**Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG)**

TAG is the Department for Transport's suite of guidance on how to assess the expected impacts of transport policy proposals and projects.

**WHO**

World Health Organization.