



BACA SPEAKS OUT ON LONDON AIRPORT OVERNIGHT RESTRICTIONS

News / Airports / Routes, Business aviation



The closure and severe reduction to overnight movements at the majority of London's Airports this summer, in order to comply with national and local Government noise contours, will have a major impact on flights in and out of London, both commercial and charter. BACA - The Air Charter Association, the trade association for the air charter industry, is asking for a more pragmatic approach to be made towards overnight airport operations in one of Europe's key cities. Luton, Stansted, Gatwick, Heathrow, Biggin Hill, Northolt, Farnborough and Oxford Airports are all now effectively closed or severely restricted for overnight flights, Southend is the sole-remaining airport close to London which operates 24 hours a day, allowing limited movements to take place.

Business aviation drives investment, it allows businesses to access markets which are not served by regular airline flights, making companies competitive, more successful and, by association, create more British jobs and more tax revenues. Luton Airport, at night, has traditionally been the major backstop for the commercial meeting of East and West - facilitating business and diplomatic missions, medical flights and ad-hoc freight movements, amongst other vital connections. With the exception of Southend, the nearest airport allowing overnight operations is now Birmingham, some 115 miles away - BACA feels this is an unacceptable challenge to the ability of the UK to do business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Restricting overnight flights at London airports simply puts the brakes on investment for British companies growing overseas and on international companies investing in the UK, it also impacts the movement of freight into key London airports. Statistics from the European Business Aviation

Association show that users of business aviation generate nine-times the GDP of a user on a scheduled flight. The restriction is almost directly related to late running airline movements and yet the impact sits firmly on the business aviation, adhoc charter and freight markets.

Aviation is vital for Britain, it contributes over £22 Billion to the UK Economy annually and supports over 240,000 jobs. People and freight travel 24 hours a day, seven days a week linking the UK to the entire world, to place restrictions on these movements will have a negative impact on trade and employment. The restrictions simply magnify a bad situation particularly at a time when the UK needs to be increasing its international connectivity, not reducing it.

British aviation actively seeks to minimise the impact it has on its neighbours. It has reduced emissions with the latest engine technology, lowered noise footprints through better operations, using noise preferential routings avoiding as much housing as possible and yet at the same time significantly increased the movement of people and goods.

Richard Mumford, BACA's Chairman advises "Over the past decade aviation has made huge strides to be a better neighbour, with significant leaps forward in technology reducing the impact the industry has on the environment. As Luton Airport celebrates its 80th birthday, the airport has made further moves to reduce noise impact, most recently by some 50% with the introduction of new operational procedures for arriving aircraft. Whilst we all understand that aviation cannot be silent, it is vital to the development of our country and these continual impacts, which affect businesses and freight significantly, need to be reviewed by the Government as part of a joined-up aviation strategy for the country as a whole."

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