Frequently Asked Questions Current Airspace

1. What do you mean by airspace?

Airspace is the invisible infrastructure in the sky.

It is defined both laterally and vertically and is categorised by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in several ways. The categorisation determines the rules governing its operation and the different requirements and responsibilities placed on pilots and air traffic controllers. More information is available here Airspace change | UK Civil Aviation Authority

2. What is controlled/uncontrolled airspace?

In the UK there is controlled airspace and uncontrolled airspace.

Controlled airspace is where an air traffic service is provided by air traffic controllers who can utilise a network of routes to safely manage aircraft. The routes and procedures within controlled airspace link the areas of airspace above most major airports. At a lower level, some airports have controlled airspace. These control zones (CTRs) ensure air traffic control can be safely provided to aircraft using the airport or wishing to transit nearby.

Uncontrolled airspace is classified as Class G airspace where aircraft can fly freely without having to adhere to specific instructions by air traffic control, unless they request air traffic services when available. For more information on airspace please see Airspace - NATS

3. What is an Airspace Change Proposal (ACP)?

An Airspace Change Proposal (ACP) is a formal application that is undertaken when changes to airspace constructs and routes are proposed by a sponsor. The process is governed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) publication known as CAP 1616, Airspace Change Process: CAP 1616 version 6 details of current and paused airspace change proposals for the UK can be found here Airspace change portal.

4. What happened to the airspace around Farnborough Airport in February 2020?

The current airspace arrangement came into effect on the 27th of February 2020 after a full airspace change which began in 2012 and included two public consultations in 2014 and 2016.

This process was concluded on 15th April 2025 with the CAA publication of CAP 2586 - The Report of the CAA's Post Implementation Review of Farnborough Airport's Airspace Change Proposal. This concluded that: *"The change has produced the intended outcomes, and that the implemented design satisfactorily achieves, within acceptable tolerance limits, the objectives and terms of the CAA's approval. As a result, the airspace change is confirmed."*

5. Why was the 2020 change needed?

Prior to the implementation of the 2020 change Farnborough Airport was surrounded by uncontrolled airspace. This meant that a range of airspace users, in addition to those flying to and from Farnborough could operate in very close proximity to the runway, and in the surrounding area without having to be in communication with ATC.

Farnborough Airport believed that controlled airspace, and therefore a necessary change to the arrival and departure routes was required to ensure the continued safe operation of

the Airport. For more information about airspace, please visit the NATS website: Airspace - NATS.

6. When is the Airport open?

Flying activity at Farnborough Airport is regulated by the planning conditions set out by Rushmoor Borough Council, these place restrictions on the Airports operations. Flight operations are permitted between 07:00 and 22:00 on weekdays and between 08:00 and 20:00 on non-weekdays (Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays). Flights operating into and out of the Airport may be observed close to the opening and closing times.

The Airport is closed on 25th December and 26th December.

7. Who are NATS?

NATS are the UK's leading provider of air traffic control services and provide our air traffic service here at Farnborough Airport. More information can be found here: NATS - A global leader in air traffic management and airport performance.

8. What is Performance Based Navigation?

Performance based navigation (PBN) is a type of navigation that uses satellite-based technology. This is like the type of technology used in car satellite-navigation systems, or in GPS-based sports watches.

Farnborough Airport implemented PBN routes as part of the 2020 airspace change. PBN implementation is a requirement of the governments Airspace Modernisation Strategy Airspace Modernisation Strategy | UK Civil Aviation Authority. PBN improves the accuracy of where aircraft fly by moving away from the constraints of outdated conventional navigation which uses ground-based beacons. This helps improve operational performance, reduce delays, and improves operational resilience.

9. What are the noise limits and restrictions at Farnborough Airport?

Operators are required to adhere to the published Noise Abatement procedures. These are available to view here: NATS UK | AIP. (Select the current version and then in Part 3, on the left-hand side, select AD 2 Aerodromes, scroll to the Farnborough section, specifically EGLF Farnborough AD2.21).

Under the Airport's planning requirements, a biannual noise contour assessment is carried out to model the impact of noise in the surrounding community to identify that impacts are in line with agreed parameters. These reports are submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Rushmoor Borough Council, on a biannual basis. All reports are published on the Councils website Airport monitoring - Rushmoor Borough Council.

During the Farnborough International Airshow, which is held biennially (usually in July) the Airport operates under a separate regulatory framework (CAP 403 Flying Displays and Special Events). Some of the usual noise restrictions do not apply, allowing the airport to support the increased flying activity associated with the airshow. For example, aircraft in excess of 80,000kg are permitted for the Airshow but are not accepted outside of this period.

10. Are flights monitored to ensure they operate in accordance with noise rules?

Yes. Farnborough aircraft movements are monitored by Farnborough Airport to ensure compliance with noise abatement procedures. A breach of these rules is rare but is always investigated. A very small number of aircraft operating at the airport are exempt from adhering to the noise abatement procedures due to their weight (< 2730kg).

For information on this please see Airport monitoring - Rushmoor Borough Council

11. How can I see where the aircraft are flying?

Farnborough Airport provides a public tracking system called 'WebTrak' which can be used to monitor and investigate Farnborough aircraft movements, and to submit enquiries or complaints. The data (sourced from NATS radars) is available for up to 3 months which allows for historical viewing. The website is WebTrak : Farnborough Airport (emsbk.com). the use of radar data means that the accuracy is greater than flight tracking websites/apps.

Other major airports in the area offer a similar feature which may also be of assistance in identifying where aircraft are operating to and from.

12. How many flights operate each day?

Farnborough Airport operates on an un-scheduled basis, meaning movement numbers vary on any given day, based on demand. Under the current Planning Agreement, the Airport can accept up to 50,000 business flight movements per year (a flight movement is defined as either a single arrival or a single departure).

13. Do all flights get counted as a business flight movement?

No, there are a very small number of flights that do not fall within this category. For instance, aircraft in emergency, aircraft responding to emergencies, Government/Royal operated flights, Farnborough Flying Club flights, and movements associated with Farnborough International Airshow.

14. Does Farnborough Airport operate commercial flights?

No. Farnborough Airport is a dedicated and purpose-built private business aviation facility. Our Planning Agreement excludes freight services, scheduled passenger services and "inclusive tour" charter flying. Occasionally a liveried commercial aircraft will use the Airport, but these aircraft will be operating in accordance with our Planning Agreement, not as a charter or scheduled passenger flight.

15. Why do I see aircraft over my area?

This could be for numerous reasons. Some examples are provided below:

- Aircraft are arriving and departing from Farnborough Airport. Aircraft follow Farnborough Airports standard arrival and departure routes, which can include vectoring when Air Traffic Control (ATC) issue specific instructions to them, some reasons for vectoring are shown below:
    - To ensure safe operation between the Airports own traffic
    - To ensure a safe operation with adjacent airports and aerodromes
    - For aircraft in emergency
    - In response to a pilot request
    - To avoid bad weather
    - To sequence and position aircraft on to the final approach
    - To enable an optimum or more efficient profile
    - There are a small number of lighter aircraft operating to and from Farnborough Airport which, due to the weight of the aircraft do not have to

follow the standard departure or arrival routes. Typically, these aircraft operate as part the Airport flying club.

- Aircraft are not using Farnborough Airport but are in the vicinity
    - Farnborough Airport provides a Lower Airspace Radar Service (LARS) which is not specifically for Farnborough Airport traffic. This service is primarily for General Aviation (for example a private pilot in a light aircraft operating a cross-country flight) operating outside of our airspace and the primary role is to prevent infringements into our, and other controlled airspace in the area.
    - Fixed wing aircraft and helicopters originating from other airports can also request transit through the controlled airspace that is around Farnborough Airport. These transits have no set routings or altitude. For the transit, these aircraft will be under the instruction of Air Traffic Control (ATC) for tactical routing to maintain safe separation from other aircraft. Wherever possible, ATC provide a routing and altitude as requested by the pilot.
    - Commercial aircraft operating into and out of nearby airports have routings that take them over the Farnborough Airport area.
    - Military air traffic can often be seen as it transits the Farnborough Airport area, often routing to and from RAF Odiham.

16. **How many runways does Farnborough have?**

Farnborough Airport has a single runway, which can operate in either direction; it is referred to as 'Runway 24' when aircraft are taking off to the southwest (towards Church Crookham) and landing from the northeast and 'Runway 06' when the reverse is true (landing over Church Crookham and taking off towards Farnborough).

17. **How do you decide which runway to use?**

This decision is made by Air Traffic Control (ATC) and is mainly determined by, but not limited to, the wind direction on the airfield. Other factors such as runway availability due to technical issues may override this and wind direction at higher altitudes may also determine the runway direction.

The prevailing wind is from the southwest, so Runway 24 is the runway in use most of the time (historically approximately 70% of the year).

18. **Do aircraft have to avoid National Landscapes (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)?**

No, air traffic controllers do not have to issue instructions to aircraft to avoid a National Landscape.

19. **Is the airport involved in the airspace modernisation airspace change for the London area?**

Yes, Farnborough Airport was previously undertaking and sponsoring an airspace change as part of this work. However, due to the establishment of the UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS), airspace change for modernisation of the London area will now be led by them. All the airports involved will work with UKADS but will no longer be the sponsor of independent modernisation ACPs. Work to transition to this new arrangement is underway.

20. **Who are UKADS?**

The UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS) is a single guiding mind to coordinate and sponsor future airspace changes to deliver the holistic, modernised airspace design envisaged by the national Airspace Modernisation Strategy. UKADS is provided by NATS (En Route) plc (NERL). More information is available here:UKADS - NATS and UK Airspace Design Service | UK Civil Aviation Authority.

21. **I want to complain about an aircraft that is using Farnborough Airport.**

Complaints relating to Airport operations can be submitted in different ways. Information is available here Environment | Farnborough Airport

22. **I want to complain about an aircraft that is using another airport.**

Farnborough Airport can only deal with complaints that are about aircraft either landing or taking off from Farnborough Airport. Other airports often provide details of how to register a complaint on their websites; Farnborough Airport will endeavour to provide contact information if appropriate.

23. **I would like to become more aware of airport matters, is there a forum for this?**

Yes, the Farnborough Aerodrome Consultative Committee (FACC) is a local stakeholder forum and exists for this purpose. Please contact them at admin@facc.org.uk they can provide details of your local representative or raise any issues on your behalf with the wider Committee if appropriate. The website for more information can be found here: Farnborough Aerodrome Consultative Committee (FACC)