

UK General Aviation opportunities after leaving EASA – a consultation

CAP 1985

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Secretary of State for Transport wishes to see that the UK benefits from being the best place in the world for general aviation. Our General Aviation (GA) strategy¹ compliments and supports both government and our wider CAA strategy by detailing our approach to supporting and championing GA in the UK.
- 1.2 As the UK's aviation regulator, we work to ensure that:
- the aviation industry meets the highest safety standards;
 - consumers have choice, value for money, are protected and treated fairly when they fly;
 - through efficient use of airspace, the environmental impact of aviation on local communities is effectively managed and CO2 emissions are reduced;
 - the aviation industry manages security risks effectively.
- 1.3 Our GA Unit (GAU) is dedicated to effective regulation that supports and encourages a dynamic GA sector. Instigated as a result of the Government's "General Aviation Red Tape Challenge", the GAU has delivered many positive changes since 2014 through the GA Change Programme alongside its regulatory role. We have also supported a range of initiatives sponsored and funded by the Secretary of State. More information on the GAU's role and remit can be found in Appendix A, and a summary of completed projects are provided in Appendix B. Furthermore, the Department for Transport (DfT) have funded a new team at the CAA which will work in partnership to ensure a thriving strategic network of airfields. More information on the new Airfield Advisory Team is given in Appendix C.
- 1.4 The UK is leaving the EASA system in 2021, and the GAU have made a commitment to the Secretary of State for Transport to undertake a "Post-Brexit GA Challenge". This challenge will be one of the key mechanisms for enabling the CAA to help the GA community overcome the challenges, take advantage of the opportunities and mitigate the impact that leaving EASA poses.

¹ CAP1754 CAA General Aviation Strategy 2018 - 23

- 1.5 An independent, DfT-funded review of recreational GA (sport, recreational and personal transport flying)² completed this year found that the current overall risk levels associated with GA activity were tolerable, and that recent regulatory changes introduced by both EASA and the UK had had no adverse effect on safety levels. However, it did recognise that “safety is never a job done”, and this will be increasingly important as we move towards integrating new technology and different types of airspace users.
- 1.6 The aviation industry has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which continues to have a profound effect across individuals, businesses, associations and the CAA. We understand that the GA communities do not have the same levels of resources as the commercial aviation sector, and may feel under threat or have differing appetites for change.

We want to hear from you

What we are seeking views on

- 1.7 This consultation is an opportunity for you to help us achieve our ambition of making the UK a great place to fly with a flourishing GA sector. Successfully delivering our objectives will only be possible if we work collaboratively. The CAA would therefore like to understand:
- how we can help the GA community (and its associated businesses and industries) to flourish after leaving EASA, and to identify its specific priorities;
 - how we can engage with and work more efficiently, constructively and collaboratively with the GA communities in delivering our objectives;
 - the priorities of those who are not part of the GA community when considering the future of General Aviation in the UK.
- 1.8 We are using our dedicated engagement portal to ask several questions. Those questions are set out in Chapters 2 and 3, and details of how to respond are set out in Chapter 4.
- 1.9 General Aviation (GA) is defined by the International Civil Aviation Organisation as ‘All civil aviation operations other than scheduled air services and non-scheduled air transport operations for remuneration or hire’. For the purposes of this consultation ‘GA’ means the use of GA aircraft for private flying consisting of personal transport, training, recreational and sporting activity (including skydiving). GA non-complex aircraft are in scope including microlights, amateur-built and historic aircraft (including ex-military), balloons, airships, paramotors,

² Recreational General Aviation: The Approach to Risk and Safety; CAP 1886

gliders, rotorcraft, piston twin and singles up to 5,700kg maximum take-off weight and single pilot helicopters up to 3,175kg.

What we are not seeking views on

1.10 In this consultation we are not seeking views on:

- technical or operational concepts about how aircraft may fly
- aspects of airspace design (this is being reviewed separately³)
- areas outside of our responsibility e.g. VAT on fuel, VAT on training.

³ See CAP1934 and CAP1935

Chapter 2

Opportunities

Post Brexit GA Challenge

- 2.1 As part of our commitment to making the UK a great place to fly with a flourishing GA sector we are launching a new GA challenge, similar to that of the previous Government Red Tape Challenge but this time focussed on the changes associated with the UK leaving the EASA system.
- 2.2 It is envisaged that the UK leaving EASA could provide a range of potential opportunities for further positive reform and we want your help to identify and prioritise those opportunities which are the most important to you. To that end we are launching the “Post-Brexit GA Challenge” for GA in the UK which focusses on the following outcomes:
- implementing the equivalent of EASA regulations (after the 31 Dec 2020) which we and the GA sector agree the UK should adopt;
 - mitigating potential impacts that leaving EASA may pose;
 - diverging from EASA and removing any EU "Red Tape" or perceived "Gold-Plating" by the CAA of prior EASA regulations while maintaining ICAO compliance;
 - Maintaining overall GA risks to participants, other airspace users and third parties at a tolerable level in the context of increasing demand for delegation to organising bodies and greater demand for access to lower airspace from other users (e.g. drones).
- 2.3 To help concentrate effort, opportunities are being sought across the following key areas of our work with the GA sector: airworthiness and maintenance, manufacturing and UK industry, licensing and flying training, airfields, rules of the air, medical, associations and Historic Aircraft.
- 2.4 The scope of this challenge includes GA and GA aircraft as defined in para 1.9 and excludes Commercial Air Transport (scheduled or non-scheduled), complex ATOs and Airspace variations⁴.
- 2.5 We have defined a framework which provides structure to help the GAU prioritise and progress these opportunities and ensuring that there are no unintended consequences from implementation. An integral part of this framework are the

⁴ The CAA has recently consulted on a draft procedure for reviewing the classification of airspace – CAP1934