

News Release

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CLASS G STUDY A GREAT SUCCESS

The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said today that a scoping study into the use of Class G airspace received representations from well over 1,000 general aviation pilots. The findings of the consultation, carried out as part of the Airspace & Safety Initiative (ASI), will provide a much greater understanding of who is using Class G, and how they are using it. The CAA, which has overseen the project, that has been funded jointly by CAA, NATS, DfT and the industry/government body dealing with windfarm developments, said it would share the outcomes once the analysis is completed.,

Phil Roberts, Assistant Director of Airspace Policy at the CAA, said: "We are delighted with the response. GA pilots have been fantastic in taking time out to submit detailed responses to contribute to this study. Most of them had to pour over their logbooks to get the relevant data, so we are very grateful for the attention to detail and the time they have taken to do this properly. The information we now have will be invaluable in determining whether there is merit in rolling this out to the rest of the country for a variety of uses such as planning future airspace changes and understanding the impact of changes on Class G users. We already have a raft of actual data that we have never had before on Class G use and we are absolutely determined to make the best use of this information."

The fact that users of Class G airspace are so diverse, ranging from paragliders to civilian operated ex-military jet fighters, and many operate quite legitimately without taking any form of ATC service, , means that there has historically been very little data collected on what actually occurs. Previous 'snapshot' census activity done through the ATC system has not produced anything like this level of detail. That means decisions on airspace changes and design have to be based on the limited information available which can result in changes to controlled airspace not producing the optimum outcome for Class G users.

Data from the survey, which ran for six-months, is currently being analysed by QinetiQ and will be presented to the CAA before the end of the year Using computer modelling based on the amount of flying each pilot undertakes; their average type of flight; and the weather conditions, a prediction of airspace activity on a given day or time for a set of weather conditions can then be generated. It will then be necessary to determine if the project is viable and if it is, how it might be rolled out across the UK. We will provide further feedback in due course, but at this stage the indications are very positive.

Better data on the amount of flying undertaken in Class G will also enable more accurate assessments of accident and Airprox data and trends, as the

number of incidents can be viewed against an improved understanding of overall activity levels.

For more media information please contact the CAA press office on 020 7453 6030 or press.office@caa.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

The Airspace & Safety Initiative (ASI) is a joint CAA, NATS, Airport Operator's Association, General Aviation and Ministry of Defence effort to investigate and tackle the major safety risks in UK airspace.

It emerged from a top-level discussion between the CAA Chairman, NATS Chief Executive and MoD Assistant Chief of the Air Staff following a number of incidents where light aircraft infringed controlled airspace, or military and commercial flights conflicted outside controlled airspace.

The ASI is a major review covering a number of different areas, with the aims of:

- Enhancing safety outside controlled airspace
- Identifying the hazards associated with the use of UK airspace
- Identifying the needs of all airspace users
- Prioritizing the hazards and
- Developing a strategy to mitigate those risks while meeting the needs of all airspace users.

For more information go to www.airspacesafety.com