

The Most Overflown Boroughs in London 2015/16

An analysis by HACAN

In 2009 HACAN produced an analysis of the most overflown boroughs in London. We have updated it based on 2015 and, where available, 2016 statistics. Hounslow, Richmond and Waltham Forest retain the top three positions. In 2009, Waltham Forest's third place surprised most people, though possibly not the residents of Waltham Forest! The other surprise may be that only three of the top twelve are West London boroughs. This reflects the fact that a lot of West London benefits from runway alternation (when planes switch runways at 3pm to give residents a half day's break from the noise), together with the fact that West London is not overflown by London City aircraft.

<u>The top 12</u>			
	No of aircraft per yr	Percentage of Heathrow flights	2009 ranking
1. Hounslow	239,000	100%	1
2. Richmond	200,400	100%	2
3. Waltham Forest	190,000	69%	3
4. Lambeth	189,900	90%	6
5. Southwark	187,900	89%	10
6. Wandsworth	178,400	100%	6
7. Newham	176,000	55%	4
8. Lewisham	172,500	88%	13
9. Greenwich	165,000	50%	8
10. Tower Hamlets	129,000	38%	7
11. Croydon	116,000	100%	11
12. Haringey	115,000	100%	15

How the analysis was carried out

- **The figures are indicative.** Precise figures would require a much more in-depth study which took detailed account of all the variables. But we believe the figures are broadly accurate. They are all taken from official sources. However, they are intended to provide a broad snapshot rather than a detailed analysis.
- **We only factored in the planes which used London City and Heathrow Airports.** We ignored planes using Northolt. We also ignored those which use other UK airports (over London they tend to be at a height where they don't cause noise problems).
- **We didn't take into consideration the heights of the planes.**

It is also worth stressing that, while it is clear Heathrow, in particular, impacts a large swathe of London, there are parts of most boroughs which are relatively unaffected by aircraft noise.

Our observations

It is not surprising that Hounslow and Richmond top the list. They are the London boroughs closest to Heathrow. (Hillingdon, the borough in which Heathrow is situated, is parallel to the airport so it is overflown much less). They are overflown when planes are landing from the east – 70% of the time in a typical year – and when planes take off from the west – 30% of the time. It is worth saying, though, that there are few, if any, areas in either borough which are flown over all day long every day of the year.

Waltham Forest remains so high in the list because it is overflown by Heathrow aircraft when there is both an east and west wind blowing and has a lot of City aircraft.

The fact that Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham are high on the list is a reflection of two things. The majority of aircraft landing at Heathrow when a west wind is blowing (70% of the year) overfly these boroughs. And when an east wind is blowing parts of each borough are overflown by London City aircraft.

Boroughs such as Ealing don't feature in the top 12 or even top 15 simply because the days of the year they get aircraft noise are limited (only when an east wind is blowing). But on the days when they do get noise, it can be very bad indeed.

Newham retains a high position because it is overflown by Heathrow aircraft but principally because it contains London City Airport and all planes using City fly over it (but only for a short part of their journey).

Change from 2009

The most significant change is the fall in the number of flights over Islington, Camden and Hackney. When aircraft are landing from the north, it appears more of them are crossing the Thames further to the east than before. It means that more are crossing into Southwark, Lambeth and, even Lewisham, in a way they were not seven years ago.

Maps

Below are links to maps, taken from Heathrow's website, which show all the arrivals and departures.

http://www.heathrow.com/file_source/HeathrowNoise/Static/arr_west_2015b.pdf - arrivals when a west wind is blowing

http://www.heathrow.com/file_source/HeathrowNoise/Static/arr_east_2015b.pdf - arrivals when an east wind is blowing

http://www.heathrow.com/file_source/HeathrowNoise/Static/dep_west_2015.pdf - departures when a west wind is blowing

http://www.heathrow.com/file_source/HeathrowNoise/Static/dep_east_2015.pdf - departures when an east wind is blowing

Next steps

In another seven years it will be the beginning of 2024. If a third runway at Heathrow has overcome all the many hurdles in its way, it will be close to completion. Flight paths will be about to change. But, even if the third runway doesn't happen, flight paths will change because Heathrow, like all airports, will be required to bring in what is known as Precision Navigation. This is where, using new computer technology, aircraft landing and departing will be guided much more precisely. Used well, this precision technology can have benefits for residents. It allows air traffic controllers to use multiple routes when guiding the planes. It would also allow for some dispersion where multiple routes were not practicable. Heathrow has commissioned a wide-ranging study to look at how all this can be done most effectively. It is expected to be published in spring 2017. London City Airport introduced Precision Navigation in 2016. However, it simply concentrated its routes, thus depriving people of the respite multiple routes would provide. There are

hopes that it will review this decision in 2017. If both Heathrow and London City introduce multiple routes and some dispersal – and coordinate their activities – a 2024/5 HACAN analysis could show an overall increase in the number of planes over each borough but a decrease in the number of planes over the majority of communities in most of the boroughs. The exception would be the West London boroughs where it is difficult to see how, even with an element of respite, people would not get more planes if a third runway was built than they have today.

HACAN can be contacted at info@hacan.org.uk or on 0207 737 6641

January 2017

www.hacan.org.uk

www.hacan.org.uk