

The Most Overflown Boroughs in London

An Analysis by HACAN

Hounslow is the most overflown borough in London. Richmond is in second place. But the big surprise is that Waltham Forest comes third. Indeed half of the top twelve boroughs are in East or South East London. In part, this is due to the impact being overflown by both Heathrow and City Airport aircraft. It is also indicative of the way aircraft noise has become a London-wide problem.

<u>The top 12</u>		
	Number of aircraft per year	Percentage of Heathrow flights
1. Hounslow	237,000	100%
2. Richmond	217,000	100%
3. Waltham Forest	200,000	80%
4. Newham	196,000	67%
5. Wandsworth	194,000	96%
6. Lambeth	186,000	92%
7. Tower Hamlets	173,000	81%
8. Greenwich	168,000	75%
9. Hackney	166,000	85%
10. Southwark	165,000	94%
11= Croydon	156,000	100%
11= Sutton	156,000	100%

- The other boroughs with **over 100,000 flights** a year were **Lewisham** (with around 150,000), **Redbridge, Haringey, Camden, Islington, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham**.

How the analysis was carried out

- **The figures are indicative.** Precise figures are impossible to produce. There are too many variables: wind direction; variable flight paths; changes in the number of flights using the airport.
- **We assumed that the west wind blew 70% of the year.** That is fairly typical of the average year.

- **We only factored in the planes which used 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.** If we had ignored planes over 8,000 feet (which tend not to cause noise problems in London), the numbers for **Croydon** would have fallen significantly and it would have dropped out of the top 12, to be replaced by **Lewisham**. There would also have been a reduction in the **Sutton** and **Redbridge** totals. But the **Waltham Forest** figure, while reduced, would have remained significant.

It is also worth stressing that there are parts of most boroughs which are relatively unaffected by aircraft noise.

Our conclusions

It is not surprising that Hounslow and Richmond top the list. The one benefit they enjoy which much of the rest of London doesn't is runway alteration when planes landing over runway switch runways at 3pm people a half day's break from the noise.

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

The large number of East or South East boroughs in the top 12 is perhaps the big surprise. But in recent years, with the increase in City aircraft and with Heathrow aircraft using wider and wider arcs as they land over London, East and South East London is suffering from aircraft noise on an unprecedented scale.

North London boroughs just slip out of the top 12 but, in reality, because the planes are much lower, they do get much worse noise levels than Croydon or Sutton. Like East London, the problem has become markedly worse in recent years.

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

Next steps

We have already produced a **video** – [Under The Flight Path Crossroad](#) - showing the impact of aircraft noise on Vauxhall, over 16 miles from Heathrow, in Lambeth, the borough which is sixth on our list and another place where noise has worsened considerably over the past decade.

Next month we will be taking **noise measurements in East London** in an area which gets both Heathrow and City aircraft with a view to drawing up a noise contour which covers all the aircraft rather than separate ones for Heathrow and City as the authorities persist in doing.

Later this year we will be producing a **report** with suggestions of what can be done to improve noise levels in areas some distance from Heathrow.

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