

# CHIRP Air Transport FEEDBACK

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As you will read below, our Chief Executive of the past five years, Ian Dugmore, is retiring in March 2019. Ian has, during that time, brought inspirational leadership, diligent dedication and a critical eye to efficiency in addressing the safety objectives of the CHIRP Programmes and their successful development. I believe the readership of this document would wish to endorse my sincere thanks to Ian for his contribution and to wish him good health and happiness in his retirement. Thank you Ian.

Capt. David Harrison, Chair of CHIRP Trustees

## Editorial

I am writing this Editorial with some sadness as it is the last one I shall write before handing over the controls at CHIRP in March. However, I have no misgivings about the future for CHIRP because my successor, Ken Fairbank, has a wealth of experience as an airline Captain and as a former Inspector in the Air Accident Investigation Branch. "It doesn't get to look better than that, Maverick!"

Other recent changes are that our Cabin Crew Programme Manager, Stephanie Dykes, has been promoted such that her responsibilities now include Company Secretary in addition to the Cabin Crew Programme. Finally, and by no means least, I am pleased that we have filled our vacancy for a Licensed Aircraft Engineer by recruiting Terry Dudley. He introduces himself in the Engineering Editorial below. I will simply add that we are fortunate to have obtained the services of such an experienced and enthusiastic engineer who has already begun to demonstrate his professional skills and empathy for his fellow professionals.

I have wondered for a while what I might say in my last few lines. In the end it was easy: to thank everyone who has written to CHIRP over the last 5 years. In an ideal world we wouldn't need reporting channels outside company and MOR schemes. Unfortunately, all too often it seems that commercial pressures, size and complexity mean that companies treat loyal and dedicated staff as commodities to be used to the limit of the regulations or their endurance. There is undoubtedly good practice in parts of the industry but managers at every level can make a difference by humanising their processes and generating confidence in internal reporting such that the CHIRP safety net is no longer required. Until that day comes, it doesn't really matter where you report it - so long as you report it somewhere. And if CHIRP is your chosen route, you can absolutely rely on the expertise, support and discretion of my successor and his staff.

Ian Dugmore - Chief Executive

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## ENGINEERING EDITORIAL

It is with a great deal of nervousness that I write this my first Editorial for the engineering section of CHIRP. Firstly, it makes you feel old when you tell people who you are on paper and realise that a

lot of water has gone under the bridge since I started out in aviation, so as briefly as possible here goes.

My name is Terry Dudley and I am very pleased to have recently taken on the role of Deputy Director (Engineering) for CHIRP and am looking forward to working with the team involved with CHIRP.

By way of a quick introduction for those who don't already know me and without going into any detail, I started in aviation back in 1978 in an instrument workshop. I quickly discovered this was not for me, even though the apprenticeship was very good looking back at it now. I quickly got tired of the four walls in which I worked and got a job in General Aviation working on a very wide range of aircraft and engines and generally having a great time.

However time moves on and I progressed on to different things, taking a job at LHR with a major carrier of the time working Boeings and Airbus.

I moved around a little over the next few years and also did a bit of contracting before settling down to a long career with British Midland first as an engineer then as manager for the LHR maintenance operations. I moved off the tools and into an office as a manager and decided to expand my knowledge and capability by studying for an MBA in 2003; that was a lot of work but well worth the effort in the end as it gives you a different perspective on things.

During my career to date as mentioned above, I experienced most aspects of life in aviation and taking on this role will be yet another new challenge which I am looking forward to very much.

So the question is why did I take this role if I feel nervous about writing an Editorial? It's a new challenge for me of course and something I think I can contribute to. What direction I take probably depends on those sending reports into CHIRP. However, at this moment I am grappling with the usual questions that we all face in aviation. Why do engineers, or any staff for that matter, not report the issues they see on a daily basis?

Perhaps it is because reporting is too difficult or people have no time to write reports or the management don't care anyway and of course the old favourite, "Why bother? It doesn't do any good". This all sounds familiar I am sure and something we need to change as this slide towards apathy in the workplace is a growing threat to aviation in my opinion.

Going back to my opening line above. Writing this Editorial reminds me of how I sometimes felt when reporting concerns / issues to my management over the years: nervous or apprehensive. Personally speaking I was always nervous of saying the wrong thing or just making a fuss because it could be that I was the one in the wrong as I had not understood something properly or was just being stupid.

So when we talk about Human Factors issues, I would like all you readers to think about the first HF issue we all face: the one that makes us turn away from a concern and fail to report it to a manager, the authorities or to CHIRP. This is HF lesson one in my book. It took me a long time to learn it and by mentioning it here I hope that if you are one of the people who has a concern or that you are worried about reporting you can contact me to discuss the best way forward. I will do my best to help and hopefully point you in the right direction.

I also would like to reference a recent EASA Seminar I was fortunate enough to attend in Europe where numerous speakers were setting out how they manage SMS within their own respective organisations. If memory serves me correctly, every single one of them was concerned about the lack of reporting within their own companies. As a maintenance manager I see this myself, which is why I decided to mention HF lesson one.

I don't have a quick fix for the above issue I am afraid as it is about the individual's attitude to reporting and change is always difficult I know. But let's try and change just a little and think about how you can improve the Safety reports for your companies and for CHIRP, if that is your preferred option

**Terry Dudley - Deputy Director (Engineering)**

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## STOPBAR USAGE

**Report Text:** I have been operating intermittently over the last 6 months in and out of [airport], being based elsewhere. I have noticed there is little or no use of the stop-bars by ATC, with no NOTAM to indicate they are inoperative. This has been observed on multiple occasions with multiple different controllers.

There have been numerous times I have been sat at the holding point with no clearance to enter the runway and the stop-bar not illuminated, for example one occurrence - with an aircraft on the runway waiting to take-off, one on final, with us at the holding point and no usage of the stop-bar.

Another example, potentially more serious, being given a conditional clearance to line up 'behind the landing 737 line up and wait behind' with again no usage of the stop-bars.

Although I have seen it over the last few months in [airport], it is the height of summer and the airport is very busy, so it is concerning me more.

Although I am not aware of a stop-bar not being on at [airport] contributing to a runway incursion I feel it is only a matter of time.

Lessons Learned - I would like to know if it is [airport] procedure not to use stop-bars what the reasoning behind it is or perhaps an issue with their training/checking.

**ANSP Comment:** The ANSP advises that stop-bars are used at the airport in runway safeguarding conditions, LVPs and at night. It is not policy to use conditional clearances associated with aircraft using the runway i.e. they don't issue conditional line-ups but these are not a significant safety hazard as conditional line-ups are used at other airports, with or without the use of stop-bars.

**Airport Operating Authority (AOA) Comment:** The AOA advises that it is not its policy to operate stop-bars 24 hours a day. The airfield infrastructure does not include stop-bars at every runway hold and this was a big factor in the decision making as to whether to implement the policy as it would first require a large scale investment in stop-bar installation. It has been considered through the Local Runway Safety Team (LRST) and safety governance committees but when combined with other mitigating measures such as LVP policy and Runway Incursion Monitoring and Collision Avoidance System and when considered against our record of runway incursions and associated contributory factors, the risk has been assessed as acceptable. This is kept under continuous review.

**CHIRP Comment:** Airport Operators have a responsibility to manage their risk and this Operator has clearly made its risk assessment. The rationale behind the selective use of available safety barriers should be recorded in the Unit's SMS to provide an audit trail. CHIRP's view is that the installation and 24-hour use of stop-bars at all runway access points is good practice and should be the aim of all airports operating commercial air transport. This view has been communicated to the Operator.

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## PRESSURE TO EXTEND DUTY TIME WHEN AWAY FROM BASE

**Report Text:** I completed a four sector shift at my home base and was rostered for ground transport to another base for a duty the next day. My company failed to organise me appropriate transport despite me having requested it 3 days earlier, then again 1 day earlier. I was offered a 5 stage public transport journey which would have given me over 14 hours duty which I did not take. After keeping me at the airport for several hours I was asked to get into a hire car and drive to the other base which would have again given me a duty time easily in excess of 14 hours. I questioned the safety of the drive but was told that it was all within limits and it had to be done. Eventually delays at the hire car centre meant that I would not have been able to operate early enough the next day so I was stood down. During this process I was contacted by two senior managers who put me under significant pressure to make the journey and had no issue with the extended duty time.

Lessons Learned - Out of base operation is becoming more commonplace and driving (either your own car or a hire car), is the normal method of ground transport. Due to the aggressive management style it would be very difficult for any pilot to refuse to drive between bases after a long duty even if he or she might feel that they are too tired to safely make the journey. How can a pilot who would be considered unsafe to operate an aircraft after exceeding Flight Duty Time limits, be expected to drive a car and risk his own safety and the safety of other road users. My suggestion would be to introduce some duty time limits for self-drive ground transport.

**CHIRP Comment:** The reporter's suggestion of time limits for post-FDP self-drive ground transport could be impractical as the nature, duration and complexity of the duties could vary enormously. Although this reporter considered the public transport option to be inappropriate in the circumstances, public transport or taxis should be options for those occasions when pilots feel too tired to self-drive. If the public transport option does not permit the individual to arrive at the deployed base in time to achieve adequate rest, he/she would be unable to commence the duty for which they had been positioned. Although there are no regulations limiting 'awake time', under EASA FTLs, 'all time spent on positioning shall count as duty period'. This means the operator has a responsibility

for the safety of the employee; this responsibility lies in addition to the employer's duty of care under Health and Safety Regulations. Elsewhere in the industry there are examples of good practice. Some operators do not permit self-drive positioning after a FDP. Others, notwithstanding the clear distinction between self-driving to one's home/chosen place of rest and self-driving at the behest of an employer, go as far as providing hotel accommodation for employees who declare themselves too tired to drive home on their normal commute. Under any circumstances it is inappropriate to pressure anyone to drive if they declare themselves too tired to do so safely. This information has been conveyed to the operator concerned.

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## CONTACT DURING MINIMUM REST PERIOD

**Report Text:** On the [date] I was due to operate a short day and finish at 1300 UTC. When I checked in I found out I had been moved on to flying to [ ] that day. With a big delay on the turnaround we arrived back at 1724 UTC.

The total duty time was over 12 hours and I was confirmed to be on standby the next morning from 06.10 UTC as this constitutes minimum rest.

I set my alarm for 06.05 UTC and turned my phone on. Starting from 04.37 UTC [the operator] had attempted to call me 6 times before my minimum rest period had finished.

I subsequently found out they had me earmarked for a flight to [ ] that morning, with a minimum legal report time of 6.20 am UTC.

I'm not sure but is this behaviour legal?

**CHIRP Comment:** It is not illegal but it is not good practice. EASA FTL GM1 CS FTL.1.225 (b) Standby Other Than Airport Standby Notification states:

[Operators'] procedures for the notification of assigned duties during standby other than airport standby should avoid interference with sleeping patterns if possible.

EASA also defines "rest period" as:

'a continuous, uninterrupted and defined period of time, following duty or prior to duty, during which a crew member is free of all duties, standby and reserve'.

CHIRP takes the view that it is acceptable for operators to attempt to contact pilots during their rest periods by phone, text or e-mail but there is no obligation on pilots to receive such calls/texts/e-mails. This applies whether the attempted contact is prior to a FDP or a standby and whether the call is to bring forward or delay a duty. Crewing departments often know which pilots are unlikely to respond to calls during rest periods and those who are prepared to take calls. However, operators should not attempt to contact pilots during hours when they might reasonably expect them to be sleeping; to do so is bad practice. Although all operators might occasionally find it necessary to try to contact pilots during their rest periods, the number of reports received by CHIRP about this operator indicated severe resource/organisational problems at that time; our concerns were raised with the NAA.

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## CONTACT FROM CREW CONTROL - CALLED FAMILY MEMBER INSTEAD

**Report Text:** Crew control called multiple times for a flight duty change, I did not answer the phone as I am not required to do so. So they called my next of kin.

Calling my next of kin is not for this type of issue.

Lessons Learned - Deleting my next of kin details.

**CHIRP Comment:** The Operator has agreed that contacting family members is unacceptable.

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## CREW SHORTAGE

**Report Text:** Day one of a block of 5 "late" duties. I was originally rostered for a two sector day reporting around 1630 local. At 1230 local I received a call from crewing informing me I had a duty change to a four sector day reporting at 1315 local. I informed them I had planned my OFF days around my confirmed roster and was unable to make this report time. The response was that there were multiple delays last night putting most Captains out of hours for this specific duty and there were also no standbys available either. I was able to report for this duty around 55 minutes late.

Upon turning on my company EFB I received two emails from the previous day informing me that I should check my roster to confirm the change to my Duty. [Operator] recently released a memo implying that the roster/EFB should be checked during our OFF and Rest periods in order to reduce the number of calls made by crewing. This implies that I am on standby at all times, and should monitor my company iPad continuously.

**CHIRP Comment:** Crew members are not obliged to check with operators for possible duty changes during their days off or during rest periods. However, doing so could assist pilots in meeting their responsibility to be rested for their forthcoming FDP or standby, including the use of discretion.

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## INAPPROPRIATE OPERATIONAL FLYING TRAINING

**Report Text:** As PM in LHS under command training I was monitoring the approach. At an intermediate stage it was obvious the Training Captain was getting high on the Approach. I pointed out the divergence and suggested some action to get us back on profile. We eventually got back on the Glideslope with an intercept from above required. The divergence was around 5000ft to 2500ft AGL, but on an approach with significant terrain constraints, although good VMC on the day. The worst case deviation was 1 and a half dots high on the Glideslope. The approach was stable again probably around 2000ft. On the ground it was explained that the Training Captain was seeing if I'd intervene and how I would do it. I found it uncomfortable that he had deliberately flown a poor approach just for training value with a full load of passengers and crew. I realise there has to be an element of intervention training and assessment in the course, but we cover this in the simulator and during our ground training, so why are aircraft being flown in this manner with passengers on board?

Lessons Learned - I'm now very wary on every approach being flown by a Training Captain to see if there's an attempt to distract me or see if I don't update the Crew SA in relation to the progress of the approach. I suppose to that extent the training has been successful, but I question whether this is the appropriate environment for that element of the training. I feel all of this type of training should be done in the simulator and on the ground with case studies.

**Operator Comment:** We thank the reporter for raising the issues, although we would have been equally receptive to a direct approach where we might have learnt more about the specifics of his/her concerns. As the reporter points out, the instance referred to was conducted in VMC and above 2500 AGL. The Training Captain responded to the reporter's intervention and recovered the glideslope with an appropriate technique.

[Company] policy states that the trainer should act as a competent, friendly co-pilot lacking in initiative. No deliberate errors should be made however if the aircraft is positioned high on the approach the recommendation is to give the trainee time to notice and give guidance to resolve the issue. This allows the trainee to demonstrate effective monitoring and intervention.

The skills of effective monitoring and intervention are indeed trained and assessed in the simulator phase of a command course and discussed prior to the commencement of the course, as suggested by the reporter.

To be successful during a command course, a candidate must be able to demonstrate an ability to monitor, intervene and manage the operation within the normal range of scenarios that will naturally be encountered in normal line operations. It is made clear to our trainers during their line training course as detailed in the [Ops Manual - Training], that they should avoid excessive role play or in any way jeopardising a safe operation.

**CHIRP Comment:** The question of how far an instructor/check pilot should go in role play is as old as aviation and it is hard to be certain whether minor deviations are deliberate or inadvertent.

For a historical perspective, we recommend reading 'Fate is the Hunter' by Ernest K Gann which describes the author's own pilot experiences beginning in the 1930s flying DC-2s and DC-3s. One Captain, keen to test his co-pilot's ability to operate under pressure, would strike and hold lighted matches in front of the co-pilot's face while the poor sweating co-pilot flew instrument approaches in IMC. I wish we could get hold of that Training Manual!

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## AIRSPACE RESTRICTIONS

**Edited Report Text:** Commercial revenue flight being conducted within Heathrow and Thames CTRs during Restriction of Flying Regulations with permission to enter RA (T) received the evening prior



to flight. Relevant notice of Restriction of Flying Regulations included a limit line for arrivals and departures to/from EGLW (London Heliport) running North/South through Battersea Bridge (para:5g) giving an unreasonably small area for aircraft to avoid high cranes and buildings on both banks of River Thames whilst manoeuvring to final for EGLW unless excessive descent rates were used.

Lessons Learned: Consultation and planning with reference to restrictions imposed for such an event with regard to actual aircraft limitations and obstructions that would conflict with flight safety when adhering to restrictions.

**CHIRP Comment:** Battersea Bridge is the 'normal' eastern extent of a SW approach to the pad (whether restrictions are in place or not). A formal restriction to go no further than this should not be that unusual. Depending on conditions, the approach can certainly be demanding and definitely requires forethought to avoid embarrassment; however, the risks associated with this are mitigated by the requirement for all pilots using Battersea to have completed familiarisation training before being added to an approved list (held at the heliport).

The CAA advises that the Airspace Restrictions were put in place on the grounds of National Security as are many others that employ these restrictions such as Trooping the Colour and Remembrance Day events. This specific caveat has been in place for many years and has been retained to enable London Heliport at Battersea to continue operations without impacting on the security operation that is in place for each of the events for which RA(T)s are implemented. London heliport ATC is copied in to the documentation and has never questioned the criteria nor has the heliport operating authority. In all events it is the aircrafts' Captains that are responsible for adhering to the airspace restrictions and if they cannot safely operate in compliance with the conditions then they should not allow mission creep to compromise safety. Obviously the restrictions do not apply to HEMS, NPAS and, now MCA so emergency and security agencies are not limited to such conditions.

The British Helicopter Association advises that the restriction leaves sufficient manoeuvring room for an average pilot to pass abeam the Heliport at 1000ft and decelerate prior to commencing a descending right teardrop onto the southerly approach heading. The secret is to decelerate first so a reasonably tight turn radius is achieved to keep within the bounds of the river. It has the additional bonus of reducing any 'blade slap' and therefore decreasing the noise footprint.

Although this report will not result in any changes to the airspace restrictions imposed for security reasons, periodically reviewing long-standing procedures is good practice and we are grateful to the reporter for raising this issue.

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## ABUSE OF THE DISTRESS FREQUENCY

[Note this report has already been published in FEEDBACK Edition127; it is reprinted here because further information is available from the Distress and Diversion Cell and Eurocontrol]

**Report Text:** It is now a regular occurrence when monitoring 121.5, particularly (for example) in Holland, France and Germany that individual(s) are transmitting obscenities and disgusting noises on 121.5. One can only assume that they seek attention. It has occurred in several different geographic areas indicating that it is flight crew. Anecdotally colleagues have indicated that it is only a few individuals and that they are single pilot commercial operations.

The writer has reported this to the area control frequency being worked at the time but our European ATC colleagues seem unwilling to take action.

We are instructed to always monitor 121.5 by company but this is extremely distracting not to mention dangerous behaviour when someone genuinely in distress will be deprived of immediate contact.

All agencies must act to identify such unprofessional behaviour.

**CHIRP Comment:** In addition to blocking the channel for distress messages, abuse of 121.5 prompts pilots to turn down the volume and thereby removes a safety barrier in the event that communications are unknowingly lost with ATC. French authorities have been heard admonishing someone for transmitting inappropriately on 121.5 but it is not clear whether the inappropriate transmissions were being made from the air or the ground. Transmissions from the ground are unlikely to be heard by ATCUs unless the transmitter is close to an ATC receiver. NATS controllers do not receive reports from pilots about abuse of the frequency and NATS does not monitor 121.5 as this is done by the military-run Distress & Diversions (D&D) Cell, co-located with NATS at Swanwick.

The D&D Cell does not hear foul language on 121.5. Occasionally - less than once per week - there is horseplay, requests for football scores or music. The ability to triangulate the sources allows the D&D Cell to advise perpetrators that they have been identified, which normally results in the transmissions ceasing. The D&D Cell also hears pilots expressing frustration at the use of 121.5 for practice emergencies including, in a recent example, attempts by pilots in the Paris area to block the Practice Pan transmissions.

EASA and Eurocontrol are aware of the reported issues on 121.5 and Eurocontrol periodically publishes reminders about the need for self-discipline; it will do so again in response to the CHIRP report. However, Eurocontrol regards the issue as one that requires action by individual nations. Unfortunately this appears to be one of those issues that everyone knows about and has learned to live with. Occasional reports will not raise the profile sufficiently to prompt action by national authorities; it will require pilots to report abuse and distraction each and every time it occurs.

The tendency of pilots to turn down the volume on 121.5 to minimise the distraction of practice emergencies, increases their vulnerability to prolonged loss of contact by ATC and, in extremis, interception. It would be desirable to have a VHF practice emergency channel similar to the one on UHF (243.8). Should the associated infrastructure (for triangulation etc) prove too expensive, an option worthy of investigation would be transferring the UHF/243.8 infrastructure to a spare VHF frequency; this should not unduly inconvenience the military users since all military aircraft were equipped with both VHF and UHF radios. CHIRP will write to the Military Aviation Authority.

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