

ATC841

Posted on 15.04.2024 by Steve Forward

Category: [Air Traffic Control](#)

Report Title Lack of controller understanding

Initial Report

At this busy regional airport, I feel that widespread inexperience and appreciation of the task of flying an aircraft is clear and obvious with regard to poor vectoring, lack of appreciation of wind effect, and use of speed control. The aim of the game is safe, efficient, smooth sequencing. Only the first is regularly achieved in my experience. Range checks are inconsistent and, as a result, extra fuel is used and it's very difficult to achieve a CDA onto final. Self-positioning onto final seems shunned when it is quiet, and there's a lack of coordination between tower and approach; the default spacing of 8 miles (to enable departures) is regularly meaningless as more often than not you are vectored/slowed to achieve this gap only to be cleared to land on first contact with the tower, at 8 miles! In a similar vein, being slowed in the radar sequence and then effectively told to fly 'best' speed on final is not uncommon. I believe that the controllers are offered regular jump seat flights; this should be mandatory and would really help to improve things.

Comment

There's a lot of inexperience in the overall aviation system at the moment, and this includes the controlling environment so allowances need to be made for inexperienced controllers or trainees. *CHIRP* is of course in broad agreement with the notion that controllers would benefit from flight experience. There are programmes for controllers to do this, but they tend to be done on an as-and-when basis rather than being a mandatory requirement. Making it mandatory as a formal part of the controller syllabus or roster would probably be hard to achieve due to limited controller availability, but more could be done to encourage controllers to do such trips by providing time within rosters rather than it being done in their own time, which few would be likely to embrace. In order to achieve this, airlines need also to be pro-active in offering jump-seats to controllers, and make it easier to do so at relatively short notice rather than the seeming bureaucracy that currently exists to get authorisation into the cockpit – it's in airlines' own interests to have controllers who have experience of what's going on in the cockpit. Jump-seat flights for controllers tailed off during the pandemic for obvious reasons and so the whole concept needs to be reinvigorated to bring it back to the fore.

Although it may have been the case in this instance, if, as pilots, you don't think you're getting the

level of service you expect from ATC then talk to them about the issues afterwards in a considered manner so that feedback can be given. That cuts both ways, and most airfields will have an operational liaison group where concerns from both sides can be raised as necessary. In a similar manner, there are many inexperienced pilots in the system and they should also be encouraged to go to the Tower where possible (particularly during their training) to experience what's going on from the other perspective during busy periods and so enable cross-pollination in both directions.



