



Q&A

FLIGHT TRAINING

NEWS

We apologise but due to technical reasons the live Q&A with FTN was not recorded. Here is a complete Q&A answering all questions submitted.

Is UK GA over-regulated? Would UK flying schools and clubs be better off if they had an industry body looking after training, licencing and safety issues, in keeping with devolved sectors of the GA community such as UK Gliding

Supporting the potential growth of both sectors and integration. PwC saying the sector has the potential to be worth £3 billion by 2030 and RPAS operations accounting for a further £42 billion. There are enormous potential benefits for UK PLC, and this is why I feel we can no longer continue to segregate the two GA and RPAS communities. There is a finite amount of airspace and it's a national resource that is supposed to be subject to fair access. Both the GA and RPAS communities are growing and we need to integrate them to make best use of our resources.

Simplify. GA is vastly complex. This is why a lot of our short-term work and longer term is on simplification and rationalisation.

Whether new skyway code or simplifying our approach to licencing. In terms of pilot licencing, we have brought the EASA licencing regulations and guidance material over into UK law and guidance. In addition, we still have licences issued under pre-existing UK legislation. We appreciate that this can make navigating the licencing requirements complex and time consuming.

Improving our communication.

Modernise. The GA & RPAS Unit is keen to embrace some of the innovation opportunities available to operators and aerodromes. These include biofuels, electrification and how technology can be used to improve things like MOR reporting.

Is the CAA prioritising drone deployment in UK airspace to the detriment of the rest of the General Aviation community?

UK airspace needs to be fair and equitable to all.

Any drone operation that is currently BVLOS is highly controlled and offered on a temporary basis.

What is the CAA's current relationship with EASA? Are the two agencies in regular contact and what is being talked about? Of particular concern for flight schools and commercial pilots is to learn whether mutual licence recognition is an ongoing topic of discussion.

The relationship between the UK and the EU is very formal at this time. There are discussions starting shortly at Government level, we hope that once this has been completed, that EASA and the CAA can have more open discourse.

Given the on-going serious problems with both private and professional pilot exams, is the CAA the right body to be delivering pilot exams? N.B Sophie will be including in intro and we can revisit in panel but needs to be GA orientated.

I covered some of this earlier in the presentation. We believe the e-exams platform is working well and we will continue to improve it by working in partnership with the community.

The link between safety data and competency is key so we are the right body to manage e-exams.

Has the CAA considered charging airports for the controlled airspace that they effectively own? Would this be an effective way of reducing the size of under-utilised blocks of airspace and temper the appetite of small regionals airports to 'own' large blocks of airspace?

The CAA has no plans to charge for blocks of airspace around airports. Controlled airspace (CAS) is put in place following a detailed and open process and is restricted to the minimum necessary to provide the services required by those using the CAS. Charging would imply possession rights and rubs against the fact that airspace is a national asset.

We have introduced a new team who are already looking at the current classification of some airspace areas to determine (and amend if appropriate) airspace that is proven to be under-utilised for the purpose it was originally put in place. You will be aware of the recent call for information in the COTSWOLD region (closed 30 Sep). Modern aircraft techniques, matched with the new FAS1 modernisation programme will move towards smaller, tighter airspace constructs.

Does the CAA consider that the requirement for it to recover its costs from industry (making it the most expensive regulator in Europe) is in keeping with Government's stated aim to make the UK the best place in the world for GA? Would the CAA be better placed to assist UK GA in becoming a world-beater if it had a funding arrangement similar to the American FAA?

The UK Government requires that our costs are met entirely from charges to those we provide a service to or regulate.

We are looking to review our funding model. We have engaged with DfT and the Finance Advisory committee to discuss our initial plans and rationale for the Future Funding Model. We have also had an initial workshop with FAC members and will be moving this forward (with the help of a survey) in the next quarter and holding individual sessions with each one of our stakeholder groups.

Does the CAA apply the same tolerance matrix to level busts by airliners operating in controlled airspace as it does to VFR GA pilots who infringe controlled airspace?

Level Busts within CAS are subject to reporting by the Airspace Control Authorities. The mix of National and Foreign traffic means the system leans towards the airline companies who operate their own Just Culture processes and advise on retraining and education where necessary.

Why doesn't the CAA have an open and transparent tender process for awarding contracts? Is it right that multi-thousand pound contracts are awarded without tender, and that unpublicised contracts are awarded to ex-CAA employees?

In April, the General Aviation Unit (GAU) sought to formalise a number of third-party working agreements. One of these has been to seek a contractor to provide a cost effective and efficient safety promotion, and safety education service to pilots across the general aviation sector to support CAA's existing work in this area led by the GAU and Communications teams.

Following a widely publicised invitation to tender, 19 third-party suppliers expressed their interest with 3 organisations providing written proposals followed by an internal presentation to the tender panel made up of 5 CAA personnel. As set out in CAA's tender documentation, each proposal was evaluated on their technical and commercial submissions to identify the most economically advantageous tender. This thorough procurement process resulted in Astral Aviation being awarded the contract for the provision of GA Safety Promotions commencing from 1 April 2021. This is a one-year contract with the ability to renew up to a further two years with a maximum contractual term of three years. In accordance with public sector procurement responsibilities, written feedback was provided to all unsuccessful suppliers which detailed the evaluation scoring and relative characteristics and advantages of the successful bidder.

The tender, in line with public contract regulations was fully public and advertised through the governments find a tender platform. CAA do not advertise tender opportunities elsewhere, social media or otherwise.

CAA practices and applies public sector procurement rules, regulations and best practice in our tenders.

What is the role of CAA International, and is it reasonable that one person can be both responsible for regulating a flying school (as a CAA employee), and then at the same time also required to make a profit from that flying school (as a CAAi contractor)?

This question specifically relates to the e-exam platform.

In order to progress our modernisation plan to move TK exams online the CAA ran an open competitive process for the procurement of a strategic e-Examinations capability in 2008 and gain in 2011.

Regrettably this process was unsuccessful as CAA were unable to conclude provisions with a supplier that would encompass the strategic needs of the CAA.

A revised approach was taken whereby CAAi, the wholly owned technical assistance arm of the CAA, formed an innovation partnership with a leading global e-Assessment provider under a framework cooperation agreement.

The partnership was an enabler to develop the suppliers existing systems to meet the future strategic needs of the CAA.

In terms of how we work with CAAi and mitigate conflicts of interest:

SARG and CAAi operate a robust policy and assessment process to assure no conflict of interest. This was recently reviewed and deemed satisfactory by DfT.

CAAi performs no statutory regulatory oversight for or on behalf of SARG.

CAAi and SARG have separate teams with independent roles, responsibilities and information barriers.

An Oversight Inspector for a Training Organisation would not provide commercial CAAi services to that T/O or connected Party/Organisation.

PPL e-Exams are delivered at cost recovery. All income goes to SARG/CAA (not CAAi) and CAAi makes no profit whatsoever from PPL e-Exams.

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Does the CAA believe that the proposed closure of Coventry Airport, to turn it into a Gigafactory producing batteries for the automotive industry, is a justifiable loss of national aviation infrastructure?

The CAA has a limited role in planning matters, however as recently seen in the case of Coventry Airport, the CAA Airfield Advisory Team has responded to a planning application that did not support the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework in recognising the importance of the network of GA aerodromes.

Does the CAA consider it appropriate that in the UK VAT is levied on professional pilot training courses when several European countries do not impose it? Does the CAA recognise that the UK has lost most of its professional flying training activity in large part because of the VAT situation?

The subject of VAT would not be a matter for the CAA.

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How does the CAA justify its £826 charge for CPL and IR flight test bookings (which excludes the cost of aircraft hire and airport instrument approach fees), given that examiners are only paid £287 out of this fee, leaving the Authority pocketing more than £500 in administration fees?

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According to recent data released by the CAA, commercial pilot licence issues are down 71% since 2011 and PPL issues have almost halved. Does the CAA have a remit to promote and protect UK General Aviation, or is it just required to regulate it?

It would not be appropriate for us to comment on commercial pilot licence data in this forum.

To understand a full picture of the number of PPL licences that have been issued since 2011 this question would need to be handled through the CAAs FOI system to ensure the full data picture can be achieved.