

Letter of Agreement between Newcastle International Airport Ltd and the British Gliding Association.

PURPOSE

This Letter of Agreement (LoA) is to formally define the operating procedures between Newcastle International Airport and the British Gliding Association.

SIGNATORIES

Newcastle Airport

The Airport, position 550217N 014123W is a CAA licensed international airport protected by an area of Class D airspace. Used by Public transport aircraft, private operators and military traffic.

The Newcastle Air Traffic Services Unit (ATSU) provides an aerodrome and approach radar service to inbound and outbound aircraft employing both primary and secondary radar systems.

British Gliding Association.

The BGA is the governing body for the gliding community in the UK.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Newcastle Airport - H24

Gliders – Daylight hours.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

Affected airspace.

To enable gliders to cross that portion of P18 to the north of UVAVU below FL125, two areas are to be established for the transit of the gliders. The areas will be defined as Castle and Derwent and are shown on the map at Appendix A.

The vertical limit of the airspace to be used is from the published airway base to a maximum of FL120, all of which is Class D airspace.

Eligibility

All pilots using the procedures in this LOA shall be a member or affiliated member of the BGA.

Failure of any party or individual to comply with the conditioned specified in this LOA may result in the withdrawal of the privileges of the LOA from that party or individual.

Pilot Briefing.

The BGA is to ensure that all pilots wishing to use these procedures are adequately briefed, qualified to Silver C with a Cross Country endorsement as a minimum and appropriately equipped to comply with the LOA. The briefing should be given within the 12-month period prior to the pilot's use of the procedures.

Pilots are responsible for ensuring that they have been briefed and have suitable training, qualification and equipment before they make use of the provisions of this LOA.

Radio Telephony.

Pilots using these procedures must be in a glider equipped with radio equipment capable of continuous RTF reception and transmission on 124.380MHz.

Met. Conditions.

Crossing shall be conducted in VMC by day only.

Activation of Areas.

The areas may be activated daily between 0900 and 2000 local, or sunset, whichever is the earlier.

Newcastle ATC will provide standard separation between all other airspace users in contact with the unit and the active glider area. Gliders operating within the areas shall not be separated from each other by ATC and are responsible for providing separation from other gliders operating within the relevant area.

The areas will not be available when priority flights preclude a crossing clearance, when an emergency situation exists in the affected airspace or when Newcastle ATC is operating without primary radar.

Block Bookings

Either of the glider areas may be booked on a 'block' basis by contacting the ATC Watch Supervisor on 0191 214 8131. The time for the activation of the area and the length of time the area will be used shall be passed, along with a maximum Flight Level. The number of gliders wishing to use the area shall also be passed. This will normally be done by the CFI or Duty Pilot of the Gliding club wishing to use the airspace.

Following the acceptance of a block booking by ATC there is no need for the glider pilots operating on this booking to contact Newcastle Approach. However, any glider that is unable to cross the area in question within the specified time shall contact Newcastle Approach on 124.380MHz and request an individual crossing clearance.

Glider pilots may also request activation of either of the areas on an individual basis on the same telephone number, giving an estimate along with a maximum and, if possible, a minimum, Flight Level.

Individual Bookings

An individual pilot wishing to use either of the areas shall contact Newcastle Approach on 124.380MHz at least 5 minutes prior to entering controlled airspace to request activation of one of the two available routes.

The following phraseology is to be used;

E.g. ‘Newcastle Approach this is Glider Victor 8, request activation of area Derwent/Castle (as appropriate), for northbound/southbound transit’ (as appropriate), estimating entering controlled airspace in 5 minutes via (entry point as appropriate). Estimated crossing time (xx) minutes. Currently at Flight Level (xxx)’.

The controller will note the details on a flight progress strip and acknowledge the request as follows,

E.g. ‘Glider Victor 8, Newcastle, roger, remain clear of controlled airspace, ’

or, taking into account air traffic and other circumstances as follows,

‘Glider Victor 8, Newcastle, area Derwent/Castle (as appropriate) is activated, report entering controlled airspace not above Flight Level 120’(or lower level if circumstances warrant).

The glider pilot is to read back the clearance issued and will report entering the area using the following phraseology;

‘Newcastle, Glider Victor 8 is entering airway P18 at (reporting point or position in relation to TILNI, as appropriate)’.

The controller will acknowledge the pilots' transmission and annotate the flight progress strip accordingly.

If no acknowledgement is received from ATC then the glider must remain clear of or leave controlled airspace by the most expeditious means possible.

The Watch Manager is to advise Durham Approach whenever either of the areas becomes active and again when the area is deactivated.

When flying in either of the active areas, glider pilots shall make all reports regarding level information based on the Standard Pressure setting of 1013.2 Hectopascals (29.92 in) and make all reports in Flight Levels.

When flying in either of the active areas, glider pilots shall maintain a continuous listening watch on the Newcastle ATC RTF frequency and comply with any instructions issued. Controllers will take due cognisance inability of a glider to maintain level flight when considering the type of instructions to be given.

When geographical position information is offered by the pilot or requested by the controller it should be given either with reference to the published airway reporting point TILNI, or if this is not possible, with reference to Derwent Reservoir, Barnard Castle, Stanhope or Middleton-in Teesdale. Other airways reporting points may be used and are the preferred means of position reports to ATCOs at Newcastle.

The ATC service provided to a glider within the active area will be a Basic Service and an Alerting Service.

When an area is active the controller shall ensure that traffic receiving a service in P18 is separated from the active area using standard vertical separation above/below the maximum/minimum level of the glider(s) in that area. It is recognised, however, that gliders may not be able to maintain level flight when crossing CAS, so caution needs to be exercised if applying vertical separation below a gliders level.

Should it become apparent that any instruction or clearance issued cannot be complied with, then the pilot is to be contacted immediately and a new instruction or clearance issued.

The glider pilot shall always report leaving the active area. This will permit normal operations to resume on the basis of known information.

Durham Tees Valley Airport.

Before granting clearance for the glider to enter the active area the Watch Manager is to inform Durham Approach that the area is about to become active. The maximum level of the glider shall be passed as part of this message.

When the glider has vacated P18 Durham Approach should again be informed.

Radio Failure.

Pilots not in receipt of a clearance to enter either of the areas in P18 that experience actual or suspected radio failure shall not enter the airway. ATC shall deem that neither of the areas has been activated on such occasions.

Pilots in receipt of a clearance to enter P18 must report entering one of the two areas, however if no acknowledgement by ATC of the glider area entry call is obtained by the glider pilot and after a further attempt to contact ATC has been unsuccessful, the glider shall vacate the area in question. No less than 5 minutes after the expected entry time and provided that attempts have been made by ATC to contact the pilot, ATC shall deem that the area has not been activated.

Pilots operating within either of the areas designated for gliders crossing P18 experiencing actual or suspected Radio Failure shall ensure that they have vacated the area no later than the crossing time contained in the ATC clearance plus the estimated crossing time which was passed to ATC plus 10 minutes. ATC shall deem the area to be vacated at the end of this period.

Pilots should report any Radio Failure to the Newcastle ATC Watch Manager as soon as practicable after landing on 0191 214 8131. ATC Newcastle shall not take any Alerting Action in respect of gliders suffering communication difficulties unless information is received which indicates that this action is required. Alerting Action responsibility shall remain with the gliding club involved.

Emergencies.

In emergency situations a pilot may be asked to leave the airway by the most expeditious means available. The pilot should provide the controller with an estimate of the time needed to accomplish this and also report when vacated.

In the event that it is not possible to vacate the airway in the time required by ATC, the controller may request position and level information to enable essential traffic information to be passed to both parties.

Records.

Both Newcastle ATC (by entry in the ATC log book) and the BGA shall keep records of the activation's requested, granted or refused to provide means for statistical analysis of the Derwent/Castle areas operations.

The BGA shall keep a record of all pilots briefed and authorised to use these procedures, especially name and date of briefing.

Future Airspace Development.

Nothing in this LoA shall compromise or hinder the possible development of procedures adjacent to or within the airspace designated for glider crossing, as shown on the chart at Appendix A.

APPLICATION OF LETTER OF AGREEMENT

In respect of Newcastle International Airport, this Letter of Agreement applies to the operating procedures of the Air Traffic Control Unit.

In respect of the BGA this letter of agreement shall apply to any person operating under the procedures as laid down for the BGA who will abide by the procedures contained in this Letter of Agreement.

Nothing in this Letter of Agreement prevents any pilot or air traffic control officer using their discretion in the case of an emergency or unusual situation, but each agency must be notified of any departure from the agreed procedures as soon as possible.

Any amendment to this Letter of Agreement within the authority of the signatories, will be the subject of prior consultation and agreement between the parties. Notwithstanding this proviso, each signatory will do their utmost to observe the spirit of this Agreement.

Validity.

This letter of agreement becomes effective 18th December 2019 and remains valid for a period of 3 years subject to an annual review.

Original signed

Newcastle International Airport.

Original signed

British Gliding Assoc.