Environmental Information

Departing aircraft

Bournemouth Airport has a robust system of noise control in place. Departing aircraft are routed away from built up areas, landing aircraft are operated sensitively and, in recognition of local circumstances, specific controls are applied to training and circuiting aircraft.

We have also benefited from some major improvements in aircraft technology over the past few years. This has greatly reduced aircraft noise and today's modern aircraft are, typically, 20 decibels quieter than those operating 30 years ago.

General policy

Our general policy aims to divert aircraft away from built up areas. This minimises the number of people who are affected and reduces the environmental impact.

Every aircraft is under the direction of our Air Traffic Controllers who provide instructions to the pilot. The Airport also records from radar, the track and altitude of each aircraft's operation and this information is frequently reported and inspected to ensure that operations comply with our procedures and instructions.

All Air Traffic Control (ATC) activities are undertaken to the very highest standards. The potential impact of aircraft noise is an important consideration for ATC and every effort is made by the Airport's Air Traffic Controllers to ensure aircraft operate as quietly as possible.

For reasons of operational safety, it is usual at all airports for aircraft to take off into the wind. As the prevailing wind comes from the west, around 75% of departures take off to the west and 25% take off towards the east.

ATC primarily assess the wind direction and strength at the surface. However wind on the ground can, on occasion, be very different to that higher up and ATC may decide to assess wind direction and strength at higher altitudes. As a result, it is not always possible to rely on ground level wind direction to determine the direction in which aircraft will depart.

Noise preferential routes

Departing aircraft are contained within tightly defined 'departure corridors' which are referred to as Noise Preferential Routes (NPR).

In order to minimise noise impact, the NPRs are carefully designed to ensure that aircraft fly a track, which avoids, as far as possible, the more populated areas. Because of the way in which aircraft operate, an NPR cannot be a precise, narrow track but it should be regarded as a corridor approximately 2 miles wide. **(*Please see separate map showing the departure routes from Bournemouth Airport*).**

The NPR requires aircraft to reach an altitude of at least 2,000 ft before making a turn (this is known as the 'release altitude'). The point at which this turn can be made is also specified in distance terms. In order to further minimise noise, departing aircraft are instructed to climb as steeply as possible (consistent with safe operations) to ensure they achieve maximum height before turning.

The Bournemouth based airlines have some of the most modern aircraft in their fleet. They can achieve a steep rate of climb and so will, typically, be at 3,000ft when they make this turn.

- For westerly departures, the turning point is specified as 3.1 nautical miles (3.5 miles)
- For easterly departures, the turning point to the south is specified as 4.1 nautical miles (4.7 miles) and to the north at 5.6 nautical miles (6.5 miles).

After aircraft have made this turn they join the national route network (National Airways System) en-route to their final destination. The varying rates of climb and weather conditions will mean that, at any given point along the NPR, aircraft may be seen at varying heights.

Light aircraft (below a threshold weight of 17,000kg), training aircraft or those aircraft which are exempt from the NPR may fly different routings.