

Departures

Information on how aircraft depart London Gatwick

This map is a graphical representation, actual flight tracks may vary

Introduction

London Gatwick has approximately 400 departures a day during the summer period and around 300 in the winter. Most of these take place between 06:00 and 23:30 local time.

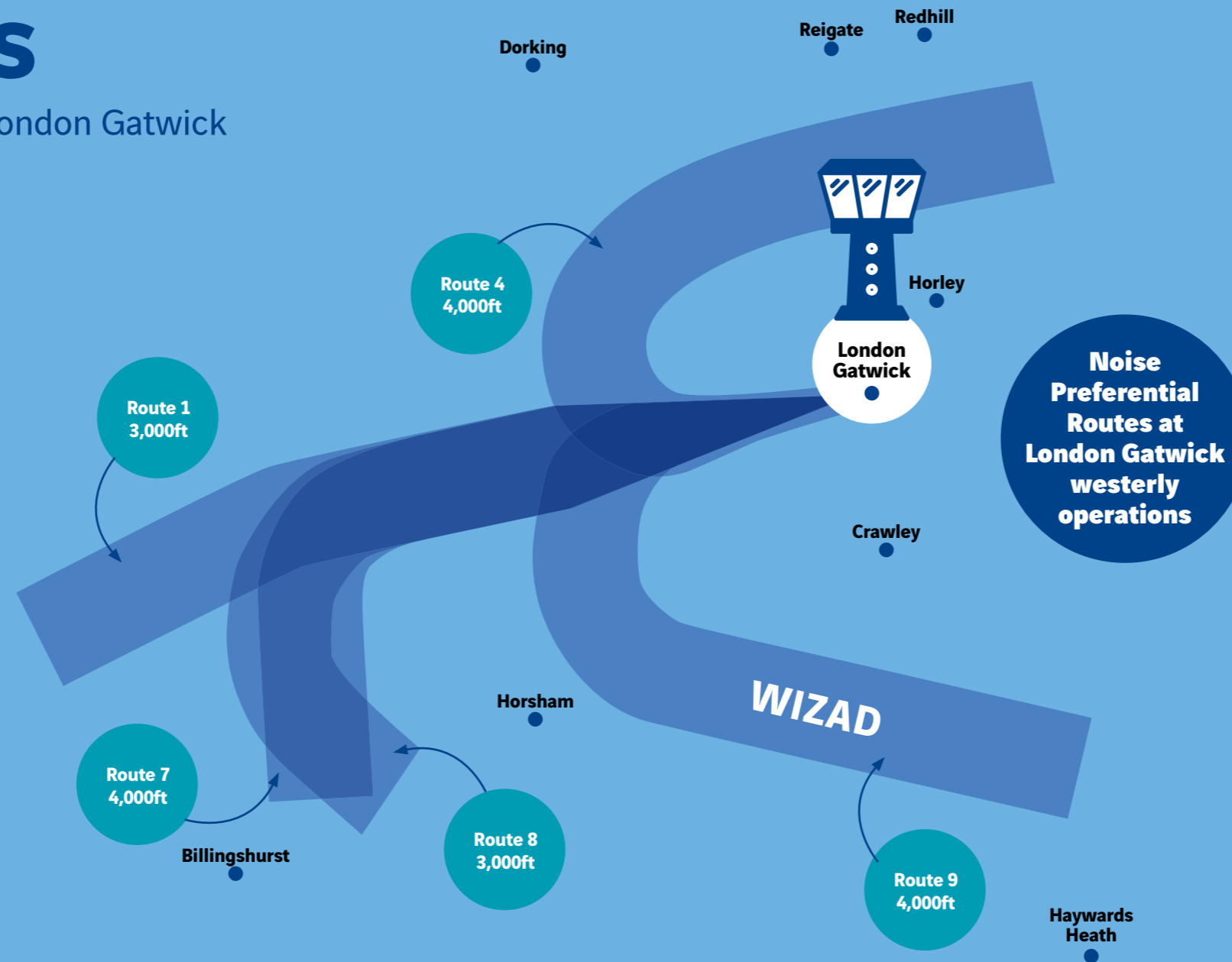
Take-off

To operate safely aircraft must land and take-off into wind. For take-off it will increase the lift produced by the wings. The direction the airport operates in is therefore driven by wind direction: if the wind is from the west, aircraft will approach London Gatwick from the east and depart, initially towards the west. This is called 'westerly operations' and is shown opposite. If the wind is from the east, aircraft will approach from the west and depart towards the east. This is called 'easterly operations' and is shown on the next page.

Direction

The direction of operations is decided by Air Traffic Control (ATC) sometimes with the help from pilot reports. ATC must take into account wind at airfield level and at 1,000 and 2,000ft which are the initial stages of take-off and final stages of approach. Wind speed at 2,000ft is much faster than that on the

ground and can vary in direction. The wind direction you may experience at home or see on local weather reports won't necessarily determine in which direction London Gatwick will be operating. You can track the current operational direction of the airport using our flight tracking website. webtrak.emsbk.com/lgw2



Flight paths

Aircraft follow flight paths designed to follow Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs) up to 3,000ft or 4,000ft depending on the route. NPRs were set by the Department for Transport (DfT) in the 1960s to, where possible, avoid over-flight of built-up areas. Each NPR consists of a 'centreline' and accompanying 3km conformance monitoring

swathe 1.5km either side of the NPR centreline. If each aircraft remains within this 'swathe' they are considered on track. The location of NPRs is the responsibility of the Government, London Gatwick has no authority to change them.

ATC is responsible for the

routing of aircraft once they are airborne and when they reach 3,000/4,000ft may give a flight a more direct heading – known as vectoring – off the route. This may also happen below these altitudes if safety, weather or traffic demand it and may mean aircraft exiting the NPR below the vectoring altitude and flying over areas nearby.

Route 4

In April 2023, the DfT requested that the Route 4 NPR be changed slightly. NPRs are not used for aircraft navigation, so no flight paths changed as a result of this modification. The DfT has requested that the Route 4 NPR be adjusted to reflect the historic position of the Route 4 departure routes to which the routes reverted in February 2021. It is important to note that no changes have been made to the flight tracks flown, only the monitoring swathe has changed.

Route 9

Also known as WIZAD, Route 9 is a tactical offload route and is not usually offered as a flight path. So, for example, if the airspace to the north of the airport is very busy, Route 9 may be offered as a last-minute alternative to ease the load. It may also be used if there are thunderstorms, which aircraft should not fly through, on other routes. It is not used from 23:30 to 07:00 local time or on Christmas Day.

Departures Continued

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Track deviations

Any flights leaving the NPRs below the required altitudes are recorded as track deviations and automatically flagged by London Gatwick's Noise and Track Keeping Systems. These are discussed by the Flight Operations Performance & Safety Committee, made up of representatives from London Gatwick, DfT, ATC and major airlines.

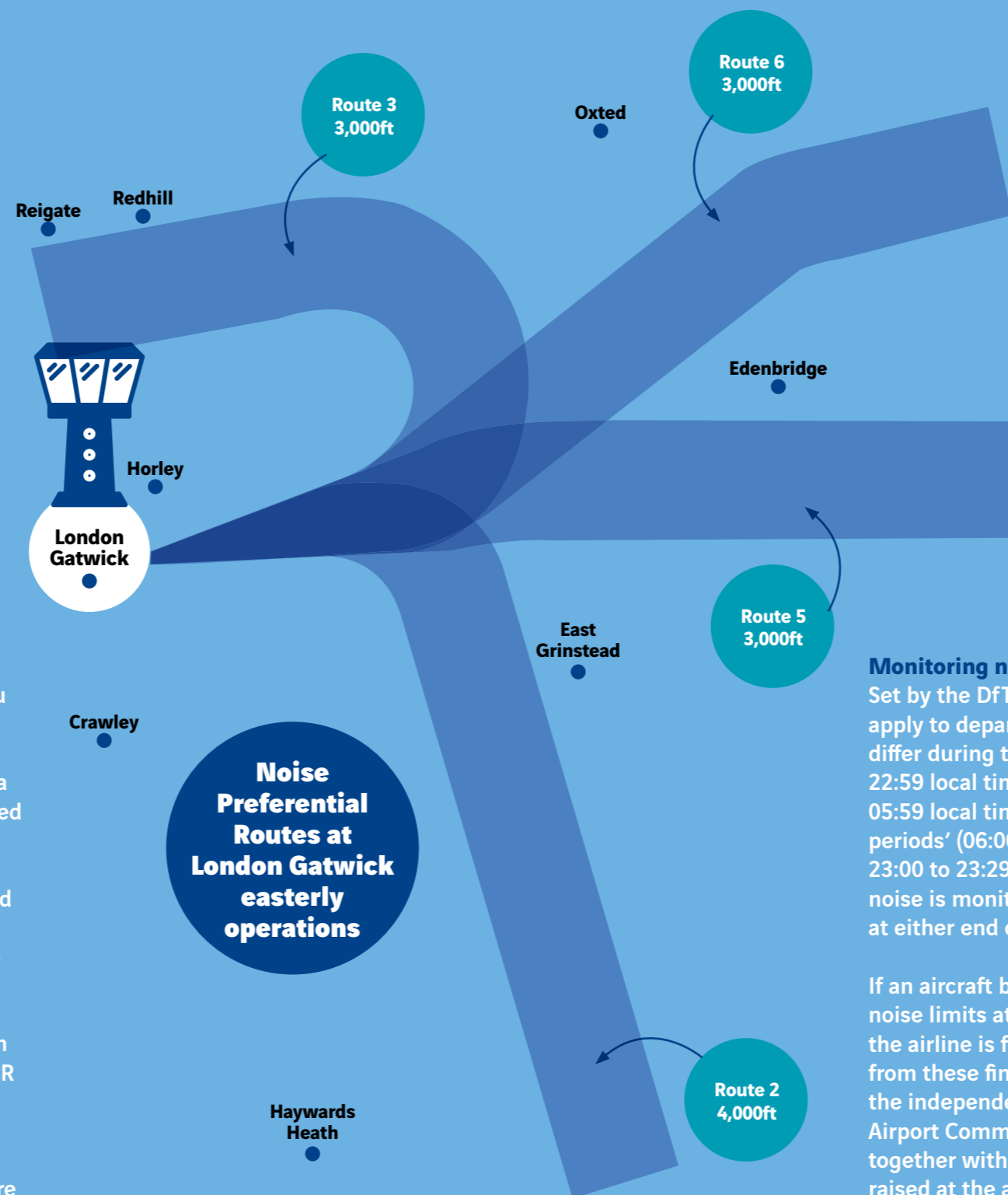
There are no financial sanctions for flying off track. Speed, wind, weight and temperature can all affect the performance of an aircraft. ATC may also authorise an aircraft to leave a route early for safety reasons.

We take track keeping very seriously and work with poor-performing airlines to improve. In recent years more than 90 per cent of our departures were on track.

Noise in your area

- If you live beneath an NPR, you will see aircraft taking off and you may hear noise when that NPR is being used. How often a particular NPR is used is decided by ATC taking into account the aircraft's final destination, traffic, weather, both locally and along the intended route.
- If you live in close proximity to an NPR, you may hear aircraft noise depending on how near you are to the NPR and if/when aircraft are vectored off the NPR at 3,000/4,000ft.
- If you live some distance from an NPR, you may hear noise depending on how close you are to departing flight tracks that have been vectored off the NPR after reaching 3,000/4,000ft depending on the route.

To learn more about noise in your area use our flight tracking system at webtrak.emsbk.com/lgw2



Monitoring noise

Set by the DfT, noise limits only apply to departing aircraft and differ during the day (07:00 to 22:59 local time), night (23:30 to 05:59 local time) and 'shoulder periods' (06:00 to 06:59 and 23:00 to 23:29 local time). The noise is monitored at fixed sites at either end of the runway.

If an aircraft breaches the legal noise limits at the fixed sites, the airline is fined. All proceeds from these fines are passed to the independently run Gatwick Airport Community Trust, which together with other money raised at the airport, helps local charity and community projects. There have only been isolated infringements of these limits in recent years.

In addition, after take-off aircraft must climb to at least 1,000 ft above the airport level by 6.5km from when they begin moving on the runway. This encourages airlines to gain height as fast as possible so they can reduce engine power and noise as soon as possible.

We continue to work with our airline partners to encourage best practice in noise management and the continuing introduction of quieter aircraft types such as the Airbus A320neo family and Boeing 737-800 MAX, operating at our airport.

Data and reports from our current and historical noise monitoring sites is available via our website at <https://aircraftnoise.gatwickairport.com/>