

Honourable Company of Air Pilots' Response

to

Aviation Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP) - Five-Year Review Committee

The Honourable Company of Air Pilots

The Company was established as a Guild in 1929 to ensure that pilots and navigators of the (then) fledgling aviation industry were accepted and regarded as professionals. From the beginning, the Guild was modelled on the lines of the City of London Livery Companies, which were originally established to protect the interests and standards of those involved in their respective trades or professions. In 1956 the Guild was formally recognised as a Livery Company and in 2014 it was granted a Royal Charter in the name of The Honourable Company of Air Pilots.



Today, the Company's principal activities are centred on sponsoring and encouraging action and activities designed to ensure that aircraft are piloted and navigated safely by individuals who are highly competent, self-reliant, dependable and respected. The Company fosters the sound education and training of air pilots from the initial training of the young pilot to the specialist training of the more mature. Through charitable activities, education and training, technical committee work, aircrew aptitude testing, scholarships and sponsorship, advice and recognition of the achievements of fellow aviators world-wide, the Company keeps itself at the forefront of the aviation world.

INTRODUCTION

To assist the Five-Year Review Committee with its work, we were asked to provide our views, with guidance or areas that might include (but not be restricted to) the questions repeated below. Our responders were invariably supporters of CHIRP, though it was felt to be relatively weaker within the PPL community than within other areas of aviation. Their comments fit well with the original guidance questions and so our consolidated response addresses those, rather than make a separate statement.

RESPONSE

- Does CHIRP fulfil the UK's requirement for a national, independent, voluntary and confidential reporting programme?
 - Yes, very much so.
 - CHIRP has proven a world leader in gaining the support of both employees and employers and the whole system works extremely well
 - CHIRP is the envy of every other State and will shortly be copied for Europe.
- In the opinion of your organisation, to what extent does CHIRP improve safety for aviation communities in the UK?
 - CHIRP provides a channel for the type of reporting that is not available through other channels, eg MOR, company schemes.
 - Useful information and evidence becomes available which otherwise would probably never see the light of day; CHIRP gives a voice to those who for a variety of reasons feel unable to report through the "normal" channels and on this basis alone it is evident that aviation safety would be diminished without CHIRP.
 - The basic requirement of confidentiality has proven a key point and the results of CHIRP cannot be understated with regard to the key issue of aviation safety.
- What in the view of your organisation does CHIRP provide uniquely or in addition to other safety reporting mechanisms?
 - As immediately above. Paradoxically, it is a measure of CHIRP's success that it is not universally popular with the regulator and company managements; the day CHIRP becomes universally popular is when it ceases to be effective.
 - It remains important that the present reputation for being able to sustain reporter's confidentiality is not lost.
 - Nevertheless there is a downside. Reporting using the more formal procedures is nearly always going to be more effective and efficient in terms of action than through CHIRP. Therefore, continued efforts are needed to ensure that a culture exists within management and regulators that avoids penalising human error and encourages open, frank and timely reporting of all appropriate events. This enables suitable discussion to take place to obtain quickly all relevant facts in a way that an independent confidential system seldom can.
- What are the benefits of the CHIRP programme, to individual people and to the community as a whole?
 - For individuals, that their concerns are taken seriously and acted upon.
 - For the community, it gives an overall improvement in safety, although this is difficult to quantify
 - Human factors will continue to present the same sort of problems, now and

henceforth, so the case for CHIRP will remain much the same.

- As proof of the benefits that CHIRP provides, the UK air display community has chosen CHIRP as the mechanism for capturing human factor (and other) issues that, by virtue of the air display environment, often tend to remain hidden. This will provide for the first time a consolidated source of safety-related information for the benefit of display pilots, flying display directors and event organisers. Their hope is that by exposing the multiple near misses, they will be better able to understand and prevent future accidents.

- **What are the opportunities for future development of CHIRP and MEMS?**
 - A flying instructor dealing mainly with PPL activity noted that to many in the PPL world CHIRP is a mystery and suspected that not many PPLs see the published reports. He also noted there are very few published items that are of direct interest to those who fly GA types and thought it is time for CHIRP to be more visible to the PPL community and to get more PPLs using its reporting channel. (It seems the GA Board is not getting its message(s) across.)
 - More broadly, we would suggest:
 - More feedback to individual reporters and more integration of the pilot/ATC/engineer scheme with cabin crew and GA pilots, as many of the areas of concern are common.
 - More integration with maritime CHIRP, as again, many of the areas of concern are common, eg fatigue, CRM, commercial economic pressures, coping with equipment failures.
 - Increased focus on security concerns and a more robust stance towards security regulators and management, in particular the adverse flight safety aspects of inappropriate or miss-applied security.

- **Would aviation safety have suffered had there been no CHIRP?**
 - Yes, but it is difficult to quantify or to prove a negative.

- **What would you like to see change with respect either to CHIRP or MEMS?**
 - More security of future funding.
 - A more robust attitude towards the regulator, airlines, airports etc; it might be a case of how the respective *Feedbacks* are written but we sense a more robust stance with maritime CHIRP than with the commercial aviation CHIRP.

John Turner
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On behalf of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots
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