

Summary Report: Analysis of ANCA Noise Mitigation Effectiveness Review Reports (2021-2024)

Purpose

This summary reviews the four annual Noise Mitigation Effectiveness Review Reports published by the Aircraft Noise Competent Authority (ANCA) for Dublin Airport. It assesses whether ANCA's actions have achieved the objectives of the Noise Abatement Objective (NAO) established under the Aircraft Noise (Dublin Airport) Regulation Act 2019 and Regulation (EU) No. 598/2014.

Overview

ANCA is responsible for regulating and monitoring aircraft noise at Dublin Airport. The NAO requires reductions in the number of people:

Highly Annoyed (HA) and Highly Sleep Disturbed (HSD);

Exposed above 55 dB Lnight (night noise risk threshold); and

Exposed above 65 dB Lden (annoyance threshold).

Target reductions of 30%, 40%, and 50% are set for 2030, 2035, and 2040 respectively.

Findings by Year

2021 Report (published 2022)

The first effectiveness review after adoption of the NAO.

Dublin Airport was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic; aircraft activity was markedly lower than in 2019.

Significant temporary reductions in noise exposure (HA down 65%, HSD down 58%) were attributed almost entirely to reduced flight numbers, not to mitigation measures.

ANCA concluded that the NAO was being achieved and took no regulatory action.

2022 Report

North Runway operations began in August 2022.

Night flight activity increased compared to 2019; people exposed above 55 dB Lnight rose by approximately 10%, and above 65 dB Lden by 16%.

ANCA found that one of the four NAO objectives was not being achieved but took no enforcement action, citing ongoing planning appeals and legal challenges.

2023 Report (published August 2024)

The first full year of dual-runway operation.

Noise exposure worsened significantly:

+191% increase in population exposed above 55 dB Lnight.

+13% increase above 65 dB Lden.

The number of HA and HSD individuals was lower than 2019, but these improvements were attributed to fleet modernisation and post-pandemic patterns, not to ANCA intervention.

ANCA confirmed that "the noise-limit aspects of the NAO have not been achieved" and that "not all mitigation measures were implemented."

No corrective action was taken; ANCA deferred decisions pending further noise assessments and court outcomes.

2024 Report

Reaffirmed that the NAO noise-limit targets remain unmet.

Found a continued 22% increase in the number of people exposed above 65 dB Lden and a 343% increase above 55 dB Lnight compared with 2019.

Acknowledged that operating restrictions intended to limit night-time use of the North Runway were suspended due to legal proceedings, rendering the NAO unattainable.

Announced continued "monitoring" but no new measures or enforcement actions.

Overall Assessment

Across four years of reporting, ANCA has:

Issued no regulatory directions or penalties;

Implemented no new mitigation measures;

Deferred enforcement repeatedly pending planning or judicial processes;

Allowed measurable deterioration in night-time noise exposure despite its statutory duty to prevent and reduce noise.

While the reports show reductions in HA and HSD relative to 2019, these are largely pandemic artefacts rather than outcomes of effective regulation. The most harmful noise indicators (55 dB Lnight and 65 dB Lden) have worsened significantly.

Conclusion

ANCA's reports demonstrate ongoing monitoring but no meaningful regulatory achievement. The Noise Abatement Objective has not been met, and exposure to harmful aircraft noise has increased. These failures indicate that the competent authority is not fulfilling its role under the Aircraft Noise Regulation Act 2019 or Regulation (EU) No. 598/2014. The Department of Transport, responsible for ensuring compliance and effective oversight, has not intervened to correct this persistent inaction.