



**CHIRP**

An independent and confidential  
reporting system for the Aviation industry

February 2023

General Aviation is a diverse and varied sector made up of multiple different communities. The successes and challenges for one community - such as the sailplane community - may be vastly different from others such as those operating powered aircraft for recreation or by training organisations.

The Community in Spotlight initiative is led by the CAA GA & RPAS Unit to provide an opportunity for General Aviation Partnership (GAP) members to talk about their community and membership organisation. This work forms part of the regular GAP meetings and is used to highlight particular communities to share and highlight what is happening in their community. Each area is unique so the GAP and CAA are keen to hear about demographics, how the community might be changing, where they see themselves in 5 years' time and recent successes and challenges.

These community presentations are combined with an on-site visit by the General Aviation (GA) team to get to know members of the community and membership organisation and to talk about any current successes and challenges.

**CHIRP** was established in its present form as a charitable company, limited by guarantee, on 1 November 1996. The charity's Aviation Programme is wholly funded by the Civil Aviation Authority but operates autonomously. The charity's objective is to help improve aviation and maritime safety and build a Just Culture by managing an independent and influential programme for the confidential reporting of human factors-related safety issues.

CHIRP's Aviation Programme improves safety in the air by providing a totally independent confidential reporting system for all individuals involved in aviation in UK's airspace. All reports are treated in absolute confidence – any associated information and concerns are only communicated to external agencies with the agreement of the reporter and then only in a disidentified format to protect their anonymity.

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## More specifically, CHIRP's desired strategic outcomes are:

- > Better leadership, awareness and attitude towards safety issues.
- > Improved safety culture by changing behaviours, so that practices, processes and procedures are as safe as they can be.
- > Safety outcomes identified in CHIRP reports are adopted by regulators, managers and individuals.



CHIRP is primarily concerned with safety-related reports about Human Factors and/or Just Culture/ Reporting Culture issues. Such reports may include but are not confined to: human skills, performance and training; rules, procedures and regulations; the design and use of aircraft and equipment; communication; workplaces, manpower, organisation and management.

### CHIRP welcomes safety-related reports from:

- > flight crew/pilots
- > cabin crew
- > ATCOs/FISOs/A-G operators
- > licensed engineers and maintenance/ engineering personnel
- > engineers/technical staff involved with design and manufacturing processes
- > ground handling/operations/security personnel
- > individual aircraft/drone owners/operators
- > flying display pilots/coordinators/directors

It is important to understand that any aviation-related safety issue that gives cause for concern may be reported to CHIRP but the legal responsibility remains to report accidents to the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB), and safety-related occurrences (including accidents), to the Civil Aviation Authority in accordance with UK regulations. CHIRP does not replace organisations' Safety Management System (SMS) reporting schemes when these are available and, if they feel able, reporters should always consider using these first before coming to CHIRP because this should result in a faster and more integrated response from the organisation without CHIRP acting as an interlocutor.

Others report to CHIRP because they may simply want to pass on a learning experience or important safety lesson from a situation that might otherwise not be reported because it fell below the threshold for formal reporting or represented circumstances where things 'nearly' went wrong but for the successful intervention of those involved.

### Our remote meeting was held on Tuesday 10 January with [Steve Forward](#) Director (Aviation) at CHIRP

CHIRP shares a quarterly GA [FEEDBACK report](#) available to all. In their latest report of December 2022, they highlight the six key themes and topics reported to CHIRP over the course of 2022 including Application of Procedures, Airmanship & Situational Awareness and Communications. The report also included reference to reduced GA reporting numbers compared to previous flying years. It is not clear why this might be, but despite 2022 being a fantastic year for flying with likely high numbers of GA activity, reporting numbers to CHIRP are significantly reduced.

"In order to help GA pilots improve the ease of reporting, CHIRP has redesigned and simplified their website and now provide the option of an App to file a report. Details of this are available here: [AVIATION - CHIRP](#)"



## THE SKYWAY CODE

Civil Aviation Authority (caa.co.uk)

As a GA pilot if you are unlucky enough to suffer an incident of some sort, you may be legally obliged to report it. In all cases the information shared with the relevant organisations is treated as confidential (not anonymous), although accidents, serious incidents and Airprox will be subject to publicly available reports. All investigations into aviation safety events will be conducted in accordance with 'Just Culture' principles. More information on the different reporting methods is available in the SkyWay Code.

## OCCURRENCE REPORTING

Civil Aviation Authority (caa.co.uk)

The GA team shares similar concerns with CHIRP over the possible lack of reporting on incidents. Occurrence reporting helps improve aviation safety by ensuring that relevant safety information is reported, collected, stored, protected, exchanged, disseminated, and analysed. It is not to attribute blame or liability but supports continued learning to make flying safer. There is more information on Occurrence reporting on the CAA website.

### CHIRP HIGHLIGHTS:

- > Established as a charity in 1996 (but initially established in 1982)
- > 5 Aviation Programme staff members

### DESIRED STRATEGIC OUTCOMES:

- > Better leadership, awareness and attitude towards safety issues.
- > Improved safety culture by changing behaviours, so that practices, processes and procedures are as safe as they can be.
- > Safety outcomes identified in CHIRP reports are adopted by regulators, managers and individuals.

### KEY PRINCIPLES:

**VOLUNTARY** - Voluntarily submission of reports concerning events related to safety for the purpose of system alerting, understanding and learning.

**CONFIDENTIAL** - Protection of identity through disidentification of persons, companies, and any other identifying information.

**INDEPENDENT** - Trusted, unbiased dissemination of safety information and advice.

**JUST CULTURE** - Non-judgemental safety net for reporting occurrences that might not otherwise be reported.



Thank you to CHIRP for taking part in our Communities in Spotlight initiative