

VATSIM UK

Web SERVICES Department

UK Controller Plugin User Guide - REVISION 112 January 2019

**Distribution and Scope**

This manual outlines how to install and use the UK Controller Plugin and outlines some of the key features.

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Contents

[Section 1 | Introduction 4](#_Toc535059616)

[1.1 Purpose 4](#_Toc535059617)

[1.1.1 This Document 4](#_Toc535059618)

[1.1.2 Feature List 4](#_Toc535059619)

[Section 2 | Installation 5](#_Toc535059620)

[2.1 Installing The Plugin 5](#_Toc535059621)

[2.1.1 Installation Guide 5](#_Toc535059622)

[2.1.2 Accessing Personal Access Tokens 5](#_Toc535059623)

[Section 3 | Configuring The Plugin 5](#_Toc535059624)

[3.1 The Configuration Menu 5](#_Toc535059625)

[3.1.1 General Settings 6](#_Toc535059626)

[3.1.2 History Trail Settings 6](#_Toc535059627)

[3.1.3 Minimum Stack Levels 6](#_Toc535059628)

[3.1.4 Countdown Timer 6](#_Toc535059629)

[3.2 Command Line 6](#_Toc535059630)

[Section 4 | Frequently Asked Questions 7](#_Toc535059631)

[4.1 How Do I Update Initial Altitudes? 7](#_Toc535059632)

[4.2 How Do I Install A New API Access Token? 7](#_Toc535059633)

[4.3 Where Can I Find The Plugin Log? 7](#_Toc535059634)

[4.4 How Do Use TAG Items Such As Intention Codes and Wake Categories? 7](#_Toc535059635)

[Section 5 | Contributing To The plugin 7](#_Toc535059636)

[5.1 Open Source 7](#_Toc535059637)

# Introduction

## Purpose

### This Document

**The purpose of this document is to serve as a feature list and user guide for the UK Controller Plugin, a plugin for EuroScope version 3.2 designed for use on controller positions in the United Kingdom on the VATSIM network.**

### Feature List

The UK Controller Plugin has a number of features, which are summarised here.

* **Core Integration**: Users will be able to download the latest version of the plugin as well as their personal access tokens directly from Core. Every user will be able to create up to four simultaneous access tokens that last for a period of one year. This also allows us to administer the plugin through Core.
* **Authenticated Web API**: All access to the web API is achieved through personal access tokens which are linked to the account of the member using the plugin.
* **Minimal Configuration**: Outside of personal preferences, we've tried to keep the amount of user configuration to the minimum. For example, users will not need to update the initial altitudes in their plugin when a new SID is released. VATSIM UK will update the files on the remote web API when required and these will be shipped out to the plugin when it starts up. This also limits the damage if something were to go wrong - we can push an update to the configuration files without requiring users to redownload the plugin.
* **UI-based Configuration:**Remembering EuroScope commands is a bit of a pain. With the plugin we've opted to have an additional configuration as a popup menu that is toggled whenever a user clicks on the clickspot at the bottom-right of the screen. This will present them with a list of options that they can they can use to open configuration menus, toggle functionality and so on.
* **Owned Airfields:**Airfields are marked as "owned" within the plugin depending which controllers are online and in range at the time. If you log onto a recognized controller position, it will work out which airfields you "own" automatically and only perform actions like squawk assignment and initial altitude setting when you own the airfield in question.
* **Controlled Versions:** From the admin side of Core, we can administer the versions of UKCP in circulation. This will allow us to immediately remove a version from circulation if it has a known defect. Users will also be prompted to update the plugin as and when we release non-breaking updates.
* **Initial Altitude Assignment**: Initial altitudes are assigned automatically when an aircraft on a recognized departure (including some non-airway routes: e.g. YANKEE at EGGW) files a flightplan. This will not be reassigned if that aircraft is in flight.
* **Expanded Intention Codes**: We've added all the popular intention codes, but also narrowed down some of the more specific ones (For example, V6 rather than just V). We have also added a number of "tricky" intention codes, based on points passed on the route. For example: Shanwick entry via EGPX (NX codes) will change to UX if the aircraft has routed via the Belfast VOR!
* **History Trails:**History trails are fully customisable on a per-ASR basis.
* **Minimum Stack Levels**: Minimum stack levels are displayed for the popular TMAs around the country. In the future we may look to expand this to display airfield-specific minimum stack levels. Covered at the moment are:
  + London TMA
  + Manchester TMA
  + Scottish TMA
  + Channel Islands Control Zone
* **Countdown Timer:**The countdown timer can be set for 0.5, 1, 1.5, 2 or 3 minutes and also features a reset button that can immediately terminate the countdown. The countdown timer is shared across all ASR views, so no matter which screen you are on, you'll always get the same time.
* **Prenote Reminders**: If the plugin detects a push and start on an aircraft at an airfield you own, it can inform you that a pre-note is required, why it is required and which controller it needs to go to. This is all dynamic depending on who owns what airfield and who's staffing what controller position. In the future, we’d like to expand this to have the plugin push prenotes directly to other controllers.
* **Local and General Squawks**: If the plugin detects certain conditions that suggest that an aircraft would normally receive a local squawk (e.g. VFR departure), it will assign a local squawk for the unit in question. If not, it'll assign a general squawk based on a set of rules imported from our squawks.vatsim.uk site and the UK Squawk Allocation plan - starting with specific rules regarding departure FIRs etc and working its way towards more general rules.
* **Expected and Actual Off Block Times**: These can be displayed in any of the EuroScope lists. The EOBT is calculated as estimated departure time - 15 minutes. The AOBT is set when the aircrafts ground status is changed to Push and Start.
* **UK Wake Categories**: EuroScope displays the ICAO wake categories by default, from which the UK differs in a number of areas. The UK Controller Plugin has added the UK Wake Categories as a TAG item, so that often-used aircraft types are correctly categorised.
* **Open Source Code**: We have open sourced both the plugin and its supporting web API. Both of these codebases have significant automated test support (which will be a prerequisite of any new developments) which will allow us to be confident in everything we release. By making the project open-source, it will be possible for anyone to submit a new feature or bug fix to the codebase.

# Installation

## Installing The Plugin

### Installation Guide

A full guide to downloading the UK Controller Plugin and its associated dependencies can be found on the [VATSIM United Kingdom Website](https://www.vatsim.uk/ukcp).

### Accessing Personal Access Tokens

If you need to re-download or update your personal access tokens, you may do this by logging into the [Dashboard for your VATSIM UK account](https://www.vatsim.uk/mship/manage/dashboard).

# Configuring The Plugin

## The Configuration Menu

Configuration for the UK Controller Plugin is primarily achieved through the configuration menu, which is a small clickspot in the bottom-right corner of the radar screen. Clicking on it will pop up a EuroScope menu which will provide further configuration options. For all of these configuration options, the plugin provides reasonable defaults.



### General Settings

The general settings dialog is where settings not specific to a specific EuroScope ASR are stored. They are stored in wherever you define your plugin settings to be saved in the settings files setup for EuroScope. In that sense, they can be unique to a single EuroScope profile, or be shared across multiple.

### History Trail Settings

The history trail settings dialog allows you to configure the look and feel of the History Trails provided in the plugin. These settings are saved on a per-ASR basis, so may be customised for different displays (for example, you may not want to show history trails on your SMR display). Also provided is the option to filter out history trails, so as not to clutter up the screen with aircraft flying at low-level.

### Minimum Stack Levels

The configuration menu contains a simple toggle on a per-ASR basis to hide or display the Minimum Stack Levels window. The window can also be hidden by clicking the X on the window.

### Countdown Timer

The configuration menu contains a simple toggle on a per-ASR basis to hide or display the Countdown Timer window. The window can also be hidden by clicking the X on the window. Whilst the display toggle is on a per-ASR basis, the timer itself is shared between all ASR’s, meaning that the time display will carry across all.

## Command Line

If you’re still a fan of the command line, then we have defined a number of commands that can be used as an alternative to the visual menu to access configuration options.

* **.ukcp g** – Open the general settings dialog.
* **.ukcp h –** Open the history trails dialog.
* **.ukcp owner <airfield>** - Prints which controller the plugin believes owns the given airfield to the chat area.
* **.ukcp owned <controller callsign>** - Prints which airfields the plugin believes are owned by the given controller to the chat area.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How Do I Update Initial Altitudes?

You don’t have to! The UK Controller Plugin automatically checks for updates to these files when you first start EuroScope and will ensure that these files are kept up to date. This means any changes made by VATSIM UK will automatically make their way to your plugin without any manual work or redownloading the plugin.

## How Do I Install A New API Access Token?

We haven’t yet found a convenient way to replace an existing API access token, but if you really need to replace your token, it is a straightforward procedure. Simply go into your My Documents/EuroScope folder where all your personal EuroScope configuration is stored. From there, go to to ukcp/settings and delete the file api-settings.json. Next time you restart the plugin, you’ll be prompted to install your API Access Token again.

## Where Can I Find The Plugin Log?

The plugin logs most of what it does to a combined event and error log. From your Documents/Euroscope folder, go to ukcp/logs and the event logs may be found in here.

## How Do Use TAG Items Such As Intention Codes and Wake Categories?

As with everything else in EuroScope tags, you can enable UK Controller Plugin specific TAG items in your display through the TAG Item Editor in EuroScope. In time, VATSIM UK shall incorporate these by default into the UK Controller Pack.

# Contributing To The plugin

## Open Source

The plugin source code, along with the Web API which powers the squawk assignments and dependency management, is all open source on the VATSIM UK GitHub repositories. Anybody is welcome to contribute to the project.

VATSIM UK welcomes any pull requests, no matter how small, with bugfixes or suggestions for new features. If you have an idea for a new feature, please discuss it with a member of VATSIM UK web staff before beginning work on it – this is so that we can understand the implications of the feature and what it will achieve.

If you wish to update any data such as initial altitudes, these may be found in the API repository.