EQUAL SKIES CHARTER SAYS THAT FUTURE FLIGHT HAS A DUTY TO EMBRACE DISABILITY INCLUSION

News / Business aviation

The Equal Skies Charter is launching a White Paper at DroneX to emphasise the importance of addressing disability needs from the very beginning as the aviation industry embarks on a new era. With rapid advancements in Beyond Visual Line of Sight and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle technology, the future of aviation holds the potential to deliver transformative experiences for everyone, particularly the disabled community. These opportunities should be available to both employees and service users alike. By focusing on accessibility from the outset, this new phase in aviation, "future flight", can ensure that technological progress benefits all, creating a more inclusive and equitable industry.

These technological advances bring a unique opportunity to prioritise inclusion from the outset. This will help ensure the industry avoids repeating the current trends of underrepresentation as seen in aviation today. By embedding diversity and inclusion into the foundation of this emerging sector, we can create a more equitable and innovative future for flight.

Aerobility's CEO Mike Miller-Smith MBE commented: "Diversity and inclusion are essential to the

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success of any business, but they are especially critical in industries as dynamic as aviation and aerospace. The future flight sector represents a significant leap forward for the industry and, being in its early stages, offers a unique opportunity to shape a more inclusive landscape for both professionals and consumers who have a disability. This is a pivotal moment to engage groups that have historically been underrepresented - if we take action now.”

We believe the future flight community has a societal responsibility to ensure that all minority groups are included in this next era of aviation. However, operators cannot achieve this alone.A collective approach is required, with industry leaders, legislators, and regulators working together to maximize accessibility. By embedding diversity into operations from the beginning and fostering inclusive supply chains, we can seize the opportunity before us.

The White Paper makes a total of 11 recommendations including:

1. Promote accessibility of BVLOS roles for those with disabilities from the start.
2. Review medical requirements for commercial BVLOS operators.
3. Bust myths with visible role models from under-represented groups.
4. Explore and active promoting part-time and flexible working opportunities.
5. Explore options for bursaries and grants to help make operator training more accessible for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
6. Introduce standardised support plans for those with disabilities.

Put simply: Future Flight operations present the greatest opportunity that the industry has seen in decades to ensure that inclusivity is at the heart of aviation. The paper, written by The Equal Skies Charter, is sponsored by Apian, NATS and Aerobility.

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