

CIMA Plenary 2024
GBR Microlight Report

Overview

British Microlighting is regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority. Two member associations oversee microlights; the BMAA (British Microlight Aircraft Association) and the LAA (Light Aircraft Association). The BMAA is able to directly issue permit certificates of validity and NPPL pilot licences from its offices, on behalf of the CAA.

Microlighting in the UK has benefitted from the change in 2021 to enable 600kg microlights. This has led to MAUW upgrades to approximately 400 aeroplanes (from 450kg to 475kg or more) plus the introduction of many new types:

Bushcat
DeltaJet 500
EchoPlus Stratus P17
Eurofox 560kg (including with 915is engine)
Groppo Trail
Ikarus C42A, C42B, C42C
JMB VL3
KFA Explorer
Pipistrelle Alpha 525kg
Pipistrelle Virus
Shark
Skyleader 400
Skyleader 600
Skyranger (various weights up to 600kg)
SportSTAR SLM
TL Sting
TL-3000 Sirius
TL Stream
WT9 Dynamic

Many of these aircraft are more complex, including retractable undercarriage, autopilot and other features.

The SSDR (Single Seat Deregulated) sector remains popular; these aircraft do not need a certificate of airworthiness, but all other regulations (such as pilot licence, medical, logbooks, insurance etc.) are still required.

The UK CAA does not recognise 600kg helicopters as a class. Autogyros are managed separately.

FAI Activity

Records – none

Events - GBR will host the 16th FAI World Microlight Championships in July 2024 and the 1st FAI World Paramotor Endurance Championships in August 2024. See wmc2024.com and wpec.co.uk for details.

Statistics

There are approx. 2600 microlights in the UK:

- 1600 permit 2-seat with the BMAA
- 350 permit 2-seat with the LAA
- 730 SSDR Single Seat Deregulated, overseen directly by the CAA,

It is believed that there are 5000 current and active NPPL (microlight) licences. There are many more pilots flying microlights, using their NPPL (SSEA) or PPL pilot licences.

Future developments

The UK CAA aims to simplify the national pilot licence and will introduce a new system in 2025. We hope that the gap between a national licence and an ICAO compliant licence will reduce, so that pilots can learn to fly in a microlight and then use their skills and training towards a full ICAO-compliant licence.

Rob Hughes

BMAA Chief Executive Officer

February 2024