

News story: New Aviation Minister welcomes industry's growing commitment to gender diversity

- Baroness Vere of Norbiton appointed as new Aviation Minister
- she will oversee government matters on aviation, international, security (not maritime and rail), legislation in the Lords, EU and EU Exit

Her first speech will welcome action taken by more than 100 of the UK's most influential aviation and aerospace companies as they pledge to set targets on gender diversity and publish their progress annually.

Baroness Vere's first engagement will see her congratulating more than 100 of the most influential aviation and aerospace companies on their commitment to gender diversity and fairness.

Aviation and aerospace companies including TUI, Flybe and Thomas Cook have all agreed to sign the [Women in aviation and aerospace charter](#), which commits companies to create a more gender-balanced workforce and a fairer industry for women.

Supporting organisations also agree to set targets around creating a more gender-balanced workforce, and to assign a board member to implement those targets.

AJW Group, which supplies aircraft parts is the hundredth company to sign the charter, following in the footsteps of Thales and Heathrow Airport. easyJet – one of the first companies to sign – has set a target to ensure 20% of its new pilot entrants are female by 2020.

Other signatories of the charter include Leonardo, Manchester Airport Group, London City Air Group, Babcock, Airbus, Gatwick Airport and Rolls-Royce.

Aviation Minister Baroness Vere said:

I am delighted to be joining the department at such an exciting time. Aviation and aerospace are great industries to work in and the support of these 100 companies is an important step towards greater gender diversity. I hope that more companies will sign the charter and I will be challenging the sector as a whole to do more.

If any business is to have the highest quality workforce, diversity must play an important part. And I am delighted that so many companies have recognised this and are doing something about it. I look forward to working with them.

Katherine Bennett CBE, Co-Chair of the 'Women in aviation and aerospace

charter' and Senior Vice President at Airbus, said:

The 'Women in aviation and aerospace charter' has made great progress since it was launched last July. Seeing so much commitment from the aviation and aerospace industries to work towards gender equality is promising for our future.

Today as we celebrate the charter's 100th signatory, we have taken a huge step towards making greater gender diversity in our industries a reality. I hope this is just the start of many great things in our journey towards gender equality in aviation and aerospace.

Current work on improving conditions for women include:

- the launch of the 'Women in aviation and aerospace charter'
- Balpa launching the Baby on Board campaign, calling for enhanced maternity pay packages and leniency in paying back training loans during maternity leave
- government introducing 30 free hours of childcare for working parents with three and four year-olds and shared parental leave
- government launching a consultation into extending new mothers' legal protection against redundancy for up to 6 months after they return to work