

SPL – what, how and when?

This presentation is a guide

Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing?

SFCL is UK law. From September 2025, Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL) required to fly Part 21 sailplanes inc powered sailplanes including TMGs (student pilots excepted).

Meanwhile, glider pilots in the UK are operating under BGA requirements. Those who have chosen to utilise SPL privileges (eg TMG) are supported by the BGA.

The BGA currently carries out the conversion from BGA gliding qualifications to the SPL on behalf of the CAA, who issue the licence and collect the fee paid by the applicant.

UK SFCL construct

Rule

SFCL.155 SPL Launching methods

Acceptable means of compliance

AMC1 SFCL.155(a)(2) SPL – Launching methods

Guidance

GM1 SFCL.155(a)(4) SPL – Launching methods

Where can I find the SFCL rules, AMC and GM?

Linked from BGA members website 'Laws and Rules'

or direct to the UK 'Sailplane rulebook'

https://regulatorylibrary.caa.co.uk/2018-1976/Content/Sailplanes_1.htm

Licence structure 1 of 2 (summarised)

Single licence – the Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL)

Minimum medical requirement for all privileges is the CAA Pilot Medical Declaration

Passenger carrying subject to experience (eg 10hrs pilot in command)

Self-launch, cloud flying, aerobatics, TMG, sailplane towing in a TMG, instructing, and examining privileges

Non-expiring subject to ‘rolling recency’



Licence structure 2 (summarised)

Flight Instructor (Sailplanes) ie 'FI(S)'

- Non-expiring subject to 'rolling recency'
- **Must hold a valid SPL inc the privileges being taught**

Flight Examiner (Sailplanes) ie 'FE(S)'

- 5-year expiry with renewal requirements
- Privileges increase with experience (subject to assessment)
- **Must hold valid SPL and FI(S) privileges**



Rolling recency?

Licence holder responsibility

Recency requirements vary from privilege to privilege.

‘Falling out of recency’ usually requires making up the missing experience with an instructor or supervised by an instructor.



Have I met the recency requirements needed for the flight I'm planning to do?

Rolling recency – SPL holders 1 of 2 (summarised)

SPL

In the 24 months prior to the flight:

5 hours including 15 launches, and two training flights with an FI(S)

or pass a proficiency test with an examiner

Rolling recency – SPL holders 2 (summarised)

Winch, self-launch, aerotow

In the 24 months prior to the flight:

5 launches of the required type (PIC, or with an instructor or supervised by an instructor)

(Self-launch can include TMG take-offs)

Bungee

In the 24 months prior to the flight:

2 launches (PIC, or with an instructor or supervised by an instructor)

TMG privileges

In the 24 months prior to the flight:

12 hours, including in TMGs 6 hours, 12 landings and a 1 hour TMG training flight
or pass a proficiency test with an examiner

Rolling recency real world example

SPL holder wants to take an aerotow as pilot in command.

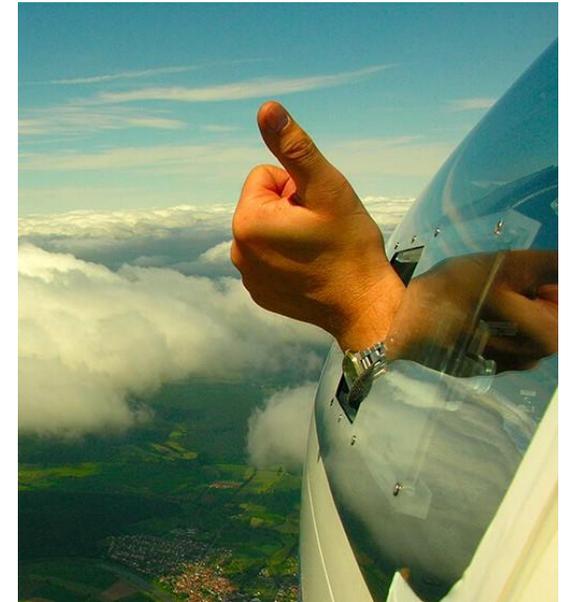
‘In the past 24 months, have I flown 5 hours + 15 launches (of any type) and 2 training flights with an instructor?’

Yes

‘And in the past 24 months have I flown 5 *aerotow* launches?’

No – only 4

Take an aerotow with an FI(S) or, if the FI(S) thinks it appropriate, solo supervised by an FI(S)



Rolling recency – instructors (summarised)

The FI(S) certificate is non-expiring
and subject to rolling recency

In the previous 3 years;
30hrs or 60 launches instructing
and
a refresher seminar

and
in the previous 9 years;
a demonstration of competence



Instructor recency 9-year demonstration of competence?

Every 9 years demonstrate instructing competence

(see <https://members.gliding.co.uk/flying-information-and-resources/pilot-licence-conversion/>)

Within 9 years of completing the instructor course
or (for now) within 9 years of the last BGA 5-year refresher

Please make sure the BGA 5-year refresher (or 9-year!) is
signed in your logbook *(the BGA 5-year refresher disappears in 2025)*

**As ever, CFIs can of course introduce additional
standardisation activity**



Licence conversion - requirements? (summarised)

Bronze + Cross Country Endorsement = SPL standard

So pilots with Bronze + Cross Country Endorsement* may convert to SPL

(*or Silver distance for those who predate the XC endorsement!)

Additional BGA endorsements = SPL additional privileges

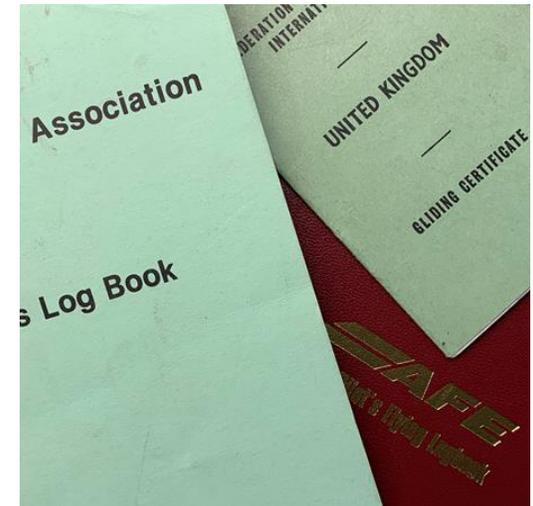
So where held, on application equivalent endorsements can be included on the SPL

SLMG = SPL TMG privileges

Pilots holding a valid SLMG class rating can apply to include TMG (and self-launch) on the SPL

BGA assistant or full rated instructor = FI(S) standard

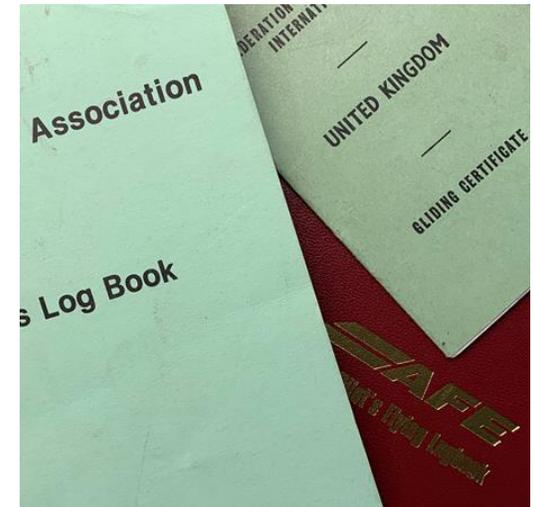
Where a BGA full or assistant rating is held, on application an FI(S) certificate can be included on the SPL



Licence conversion – process

- Download the BGA form with guidance
- Think about the detail
- Complete the form & send it to BGA
- BGA checks & makes recommendation to CAA
- CAA issues the SPL
- BGA checks the SPL and privileges are correct
- You receive your SPL – no more CAA involvement

It's all at <https://members.gliding.co.uk/pilot-licence-conversion/>



Conversion advice

Pilots - qualify asap to convert to SPL

CFIs - please support pilots in getting there

Unable to meet the conversion requirement by Sep 25?

- training records are important (record card + logbook)

Worried about a class 2 or LAPL medical requirement?

- use the PMD (currently tricky for very young pilots)

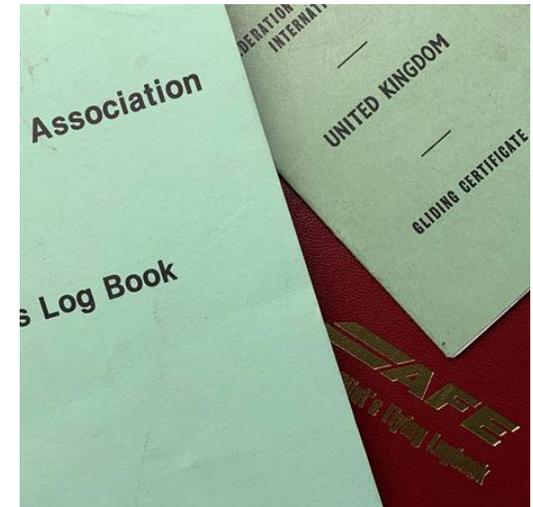


Licence conversion – commitment?

Once you have an SPL, you don't need to use the privileges – **the BGA certificate, etc can be used until September 2025**

If you do choose to use SPL privileges (e.g. for flying a TMG), you must fully comply with SFCL and the medical requirements

Note that you can only use FI(S) privileges within a DTO



What about the BI rating?

Basic Instructor rating originally established to legalise passenger flying where the passenger pays.

As a qualified/licenced pilot can carry a passenger who pays for the flight, the BGA 'Introductory Flight Pilot' (IFP) endorsement **assures the required standard and results in an insured risk for first-flights passenger carrying**

Existing BI's automatically hold BGA IFP privileges.

Meanwhile, BI's can continue as BI's until September 2025.
(subject to BI revalidation, etc requirements)



What about the BGA MGIR?

The BGA MGIR provides a framework for legally and safely teaching gliding exercises in motor gliders.

The BGA MGIR continues to apply at BGA clubs until full implementation of SFCL by September 2025.

To continue to manage the risk, a revised version of the MGIR will be used under SFCL.



Solo but no SPL by September 2025?

Pilots who do not hold an SPL are ‘student pilots’

Formal authorisation and supervision required for student pilots

SFCL.125 SPL – Student pilot

(a) A student pilot shall not fly solo unless authorised to do so and supervised by an FI(S).

2021 SI states: ‘*Medical declaration*’ means made in accordance with article...by pilot holding a sailplane pilot licence (SPL)...



What about SFCL pilot training?

SFCL training needs to take place under what are called Declared Training Organisation (DTO) rules.

DTO rules define the training content and ensure the training is properly organised (under the CFI).

New pilots will train for an SPL as they do now, ie learn, fly solo, learn more incl navigation and out-landings, and complete a theory and flying test.

Pilots who start training before the changeover to DTO will have their recorded 'BGA' training credited to the SPL training course.

BGA Training Progress Card

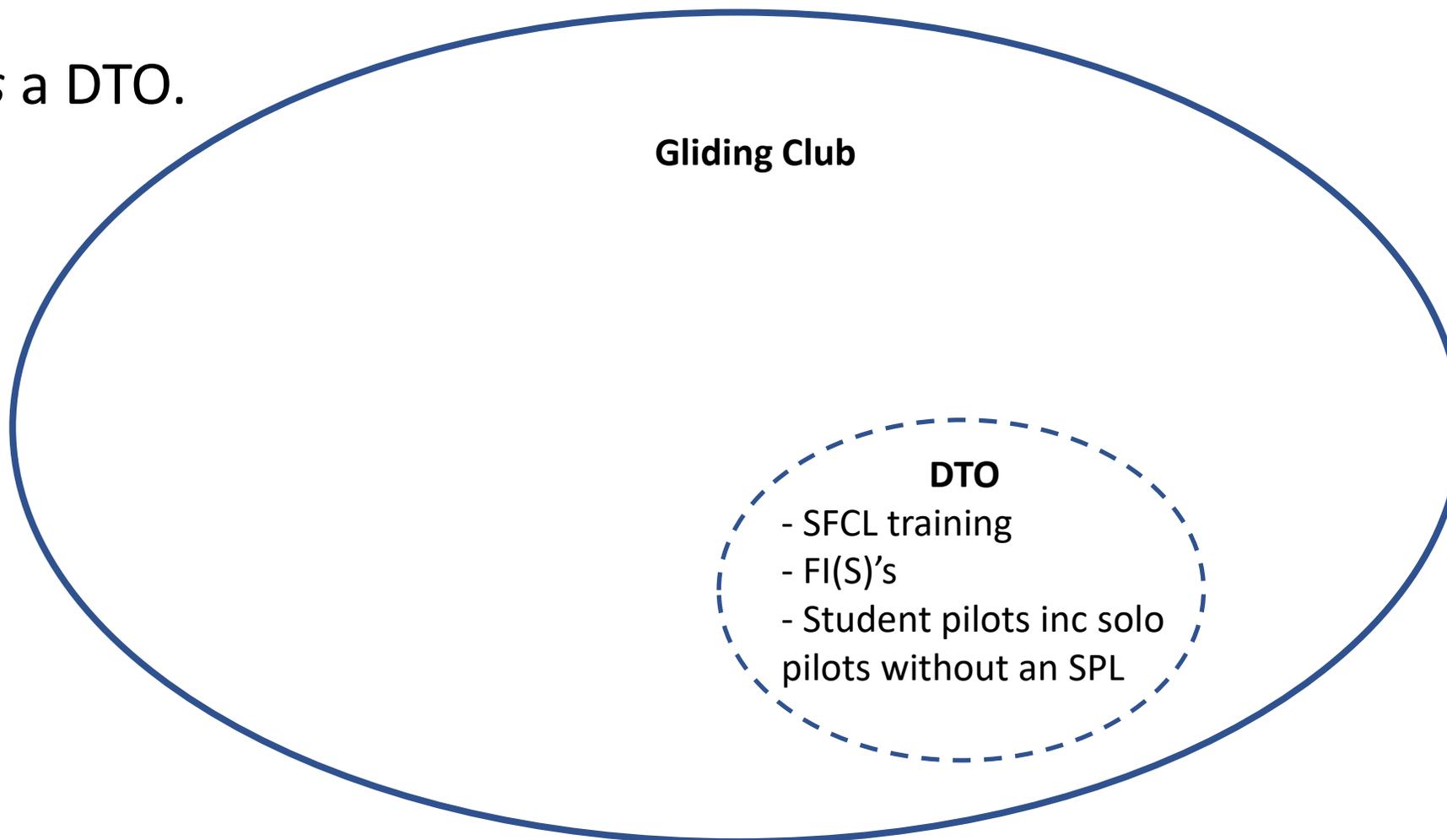
This card provides a working breakdown of the exercises described in the BGA gliding syllabus.

Name.....Email.....

Exercise	Brief	Demo	Attended	
	Name	Date	Name	C i
Pre-flight 'walkaround' check				
1. Pre-Flight Checks				
2. Lookout				
3. Effects of controls:				
a) Elevator				
b) 1st stall				
c) Speed control				
d) Ailerons				
e) Rudder				
f) Flap (where applicable)				
4. Aileron drag				
5. Aileron/Rudder Coordination				
6. Turning				

Is the gliding club a DTO?

No. It *has* a DTO.



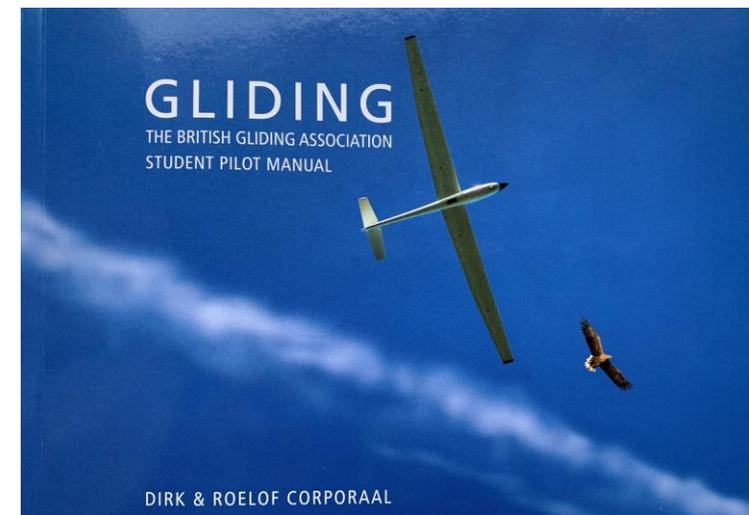
DTO development

Developing courses (including syllabus) and getting them CAA-approved
paused

Developed **new student pilot manual**

Club **DTO manual etc ready to go**

Talking to clubs about DTO **paused**



3021


**DECLARED TRAINING ORGANISATION
MANUAL**
CAA APPROVAL REF. XXXXXX
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INTRODUCTION

This Declared Training Organisation (DTO) manual

- describes the DTO requirements, roles and responsibilities
- provides additional guidance to instructors and student pilots
- must be used by all club instructors and student pilots as used within the DTO.

REQUIREMENTS

General

The DTO is established to support theoretical knowledge and Flight Crew Licensing (SFCL) rules, acceptable means of compliance.

The DTO has been declared as compliant with Annex VIII Part-I and guidance material. The following requirements and guidance maintaining compliance.

Roles and Responsibilities

The DTO representative is the club Chairman / Manager / Chief responsible and authorised as detailed at DTO.GEN.210(a)(1).

The DTO Head of Training is the club Chief Flying Instructor, or at least training compliance and the supervision of the DTO.GEN.210(a)(2) and AMC1 DTO.GEN.210(a)(2).

Safety

The DTO utilises and complies with the BGA Safety Management system at <https://members.glding.co.uk>. The DTO will address mandated by the CAA, including those relating to airworthiness

Adding a privilege after licence issue

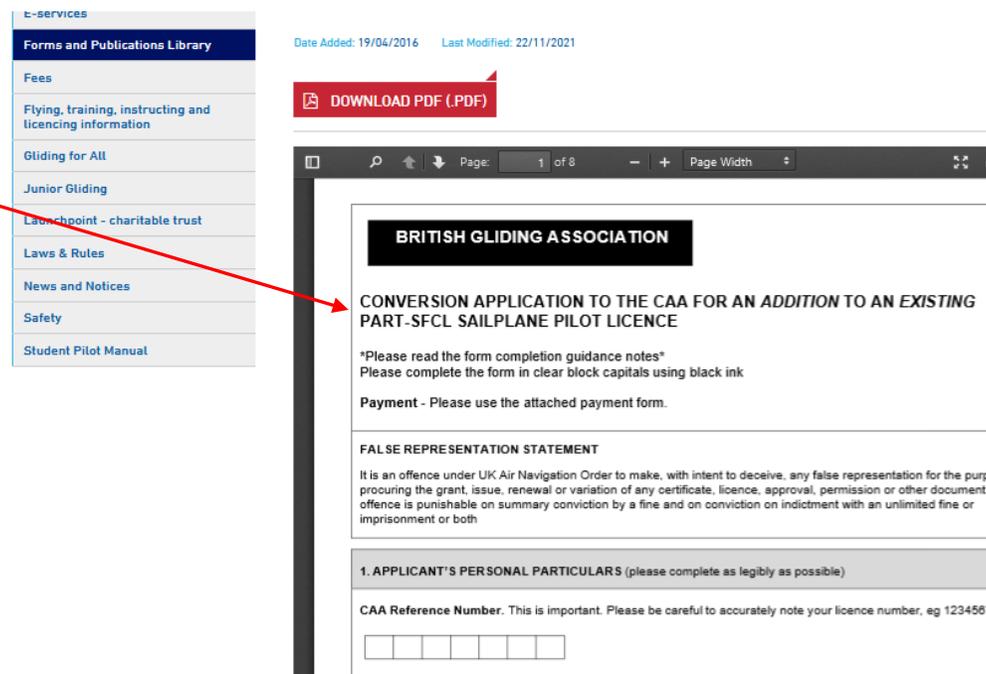
Satisfy the conversion or SFCL training requirement

Complete the paperwork

Submit to BGA for checking

BGA submits a recommendation to CAA

New privilege is issued



The screenshot shows the 'e-services' menu on the left, with 'Forms and Publications Library' selected. The main content area displays a PDF form titled 'CONVERSION APPLICATION TO THE CAA FOR AN ADDITION TO AN EXISTING PART-SFCL SAILPLANE PILOT LICENCE'. The form includes instructions to read completion guidance notes and complete the form in clear block capitals using black ink. It also mentions a payment form and a 'FALSE REPRESENTATION STATEMENT' section. The form is viewed in a PDF viewer showing page 1 of 8.

BRITISH GLIDING ASSOCIATION

CONVERSION APPLICATION TO THE CAA FOR AN ADDITION TO AN EXISTING PART-SFCL SAILPLANE PILOT LICENCE

Please read the form completion guidance notes
Please complete the form in clear block capitals using black ink

Payment - Please use the attached payment form.

FALSE REPRESENTATION STATEMENT

It is an offence under UK Air Navigation Order to make, with intent to deceive, any false representation for the purpose of procuring the grant, issue, renewal or variation of any certificate, licence, approval, permission or other document. This offence is punishable on summary conviction by a fine and on conviction on indictment with an unlimited fine or imprisonment or both.

1. APPLICANT'S PERSONAL PARTICULARS (please complete as legibly as possible)

CAA Reference Number. This is important. Please be careful to accurately note your licence number, eg 12345678

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My licence & privileges were issued pre-SFCL..

FCL LAPL(S) and SPL issued under FCL deemed to be a UK SFCL SPL

(Article 3b of the SFCL regulation)

Follow the SFCL requirements - ignore the previously applicable FCL requirements

No other action required

E.g. FI(S) can ignore legacy expiry date – rolling recency applies



Recap - BGA certified pilot v SPL pilot?

BGA certified pilot (until Sept 2025)	SPL holder (required from Sept 2025)
Follow BGA currency guidance	Comply with SFCL recency requirement
Comply with BGA medical requirements	Comply with Part-MED requirements or pilot medical declaration
Comply with Sailplane Air Operations rules	Comply with Sailplane Air Operations rules
Follow club rules	Follow club rules

Recap - Club pilot training now v as a DTO?

Club pilot training now	Club DTO training
Follow the (BGA) requirements	Follow the (DTO) requirements
Supported by BGA inc SRE's etc	Supported by BGA inc SRE's etc
CFI manages the club instructor team	CFI manages the club instructor team
Bronze flying test by Full Rated Instructor	SPL flying test by Flight Examiner
BGA syllabus's etc supplied by BGA	SFCL syllabus's etc supplied by BGA
Occurrences reported to the MOR system via BGA	Occurrences reported to the MOR system via BGA
Pre-Bronze & XC endorsed solo pilots informally supervised	Pre-SPL qualified solo pilots formally supervised

Consultation - please get involved...

CAA “Need to make recreational aviation licences attractive”

- CAA working group of gliding SMEs & regulators.

CAA licensing consultation no2 expected early 2024 - BGA will publish response guidance.

Proposals put forward to the CAA that will be consulted on include, among others:

- Continuing with a BI rating
- Simpler access to aerobatic instructing
- Allowing pilots without an SPL who have achieved a certain level of ability to fly solo without formal supervision
- Removing the requirement for a towing rating

If you haven't got an SPL, **please convert soon** and encourage others to do so.

<https://members.gliding.co.uk/pilot-licence-conversion/>