

# Reach *for* the Sky

**Flexjet Takes  
Private Aviation  
to the Next Level**

Already well established within the private aviation markets of both Europe and the United States, elite operator Flexjet has changed the game. Alongside its fleet of jets, the company now offers multi-purpose helicopter travel, too, making it the first private jet operator in Europe to launch an in-house, integrated helicopter division. Read on to get the lowdown on this exciting development.



### A rapidly growing niche

Like many other commercial sectors, air travel, and the consumer relationship with it, was transformed by the coronavirus pandemic. While the impact of COVID and its associated lockdowns was devastating for much of the industry, some niches saw a positive upturn. One of those niches was the private jet market.

Despite the pandemic's impact, business aviation found itself less affected than commercial air traffic, as executives' travel was often deemed 'essential' and therefore permissible. Even during periods when corporate travel around the world was largely on hold, private jet operators reported an influx of first-time leisure clients hoping to avoid busy terminals and crowded planes.

As a result, as lockdowns were lifted and normality returned, opportunities emerged to capture premium passengers who may have chosen airlines in the past but came to prefer the social distancing and convenience afforded by private aviation.

Among the companies capitalising on this shift in consumer habits has been Flexjet, a specialist in subscription-based private aviation. Long-established in the US fractional jet ownership market since 1995, its European operation launched in 2019, based in London's

Mayfair, with a Tactical Control Centre at Farnborough Airport and an Operational Centre in Malta.

### New developments

The relatively new European operation has helped to cement Flexjet's status as a major player in the field. This success has been achieved with an innovative product offering exemplified by the company's Gulfstream G650 programme, which launched in Europe last September, setting new standards for luxury and convenience. Not content to rest on its laurels, Flexjet has now welcomed the first super-midsize Sikorsky S-76 helicopter to its European fleet.

The new helicopter service, initially focused on the UK, aims to redefine luxury point-to-point private travel in Europe. It follows a similar launch last year by the company in the United States, which offers helicopter operations in the northeastern US and Florida. As a shared ownership provider, Flexjet will offer its helicopter programmes both as a standalone service and as an extension to its existing private jet owners.

Indeed, the new venture will work alongside and significantly enhance its Gulfstream G650 programme. Jet owners on the ultra-long-range

programme will benefit from complimentary helicopter transfers to and from their jet at airports in London or the US operating regions, to enhance their travel experience with a seamless 'last mile' solution.

Marine Eugène, Flexjet European Managing Director, confirmed the exciting news, saying, "No other private jet provider can offer access to an in-house helicopter fleet, which is yet another example of what makes our service stand out from our competitors. Following the successful model already pioneered by Flexjet in the US, our new UK helicopter division defines us as the leader in combined fixed-wing operations and private urban mobility. We're always striving to go that extra mile, and this unique offering certainly communicates Flexjet's relentless commitment to giving the most comfortable, efficient and memorable experience possible to the most discerning global travellers."

### Quality and responsibility

As might be expected, a great deal of thought has gone into establishing the new venture with an emphasis on optimal customer experience in all aspects. Naturally, this begins with the hardware itself.

The Sikorsky S-76 is one of the world's best-

loved and most relied-upon super-midsize helicopters, with a reputation established through more than four decades of safe flight history. Its safety features include twin-turbine engine reliability and a four-blade rotor system for enhanced comfort, alongside safety and dual autopilot systems. Every Flexjet helicopter flight is operated by two pilots fully certified in instrument flight rules regulations.

The Sikorsky S-76's extensive flight range of 300 nautical miles will allow customers to make point-to-point connections both within London and the UK. Those wishing to do so could even travel further afield, to the south of Scotland, Dublin or even Paris.

Practicalities aside, the company has applied a laser-like focus to ensuring an enhanced flight experience. Each Flexjet Sikorsky S-76 helicopter seats up to eight passengers and features unrivalled attention to detail, across the bespoke interiors from its LXi Cabin Collection. Hand-stitched leather seats, fittings with sophisticated touchpoints and finely choreographed detailing create an elite travel context targeted specifically to the needs of discerning customers.

Cementing this status, Flexjet will host the private heliport for the 2023 Royal Ascot horse racing festival. The Sikorsky S-76 will therefore be a big feature of the company's status as official private aviation supplier for one of the most prestigious events in the British social calendar.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, environmental concerns are another core component of the offering and indeed, are baked into the company's operating model. As with its European jet programmes, every Flexjet helicopter flight will offset 300% of carbon emissions, recognising both CO<sub>2</sub> and non-CO<sub>2</sub> pollutants.

Working with the aviation sustainability consultancy 4AIR, Flexjet's industry-leading sustainability programme allows aircraft owners to invest in further actions that reduce emissions by 5%. These include the use of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and investing in the non-profit Aviation Climate Fund, which supports leading research and development for future flight technologies. These actions are included as a default in Flexjet's Gulfstream G650 programmes in Europe, which are specifically rated at 4AIR's highest level, Level 4 (Platinum).

### The future – 'raising the bar'

Despite the attractions and reliability of the Sikorsky S-76, which will be targeted at regular helicopter programme fliers, plans are already



afloat to diversify. For Flexjet, this venture is the beginning of a new era, rather than a one-off.

Already offering jet programmes across Europe and the Middle East, Flexjet intends to expand its fleet of Sikorsky S-76s and to extend helicopter operations to other regions in Europe in the coming years as part of its global expansion plans.

The company will soon offer on-demand helicopter charters on its operated and managed fleet of Agusta AW109 and AW169 models. These were previously operated by Halo Aviation, which was acquired by Flexjet's parent

company in 2021. The subsequent integration has created a dedicated Flexjet helicopter team with significant operational expertise and a roster of highly experienced helicopter pilots.

Eli Flint, Flexjet President of Global Helicopter Operations, told us, "After such a successful launch in the US last year, we're extremely excited to be unveiling our Flexjet helicopter offering in Europe, led by a team of highly experienced professionals. We see significant market potential for our premium helicopter programmes here, and we're raising the bar in rotary operations in every respect." [🔗](#)