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# An Apology to the Drone Community (<https://nats.aero/blog/2019/06/an-apology-to-the-drone-community/>)

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Yesterday I gave evidence to the Science & Technology Select Committee in Parliament as part of its inquiry into commercial and recreational drone use. It is really encouraging to see Parliament taking this issue so seriously.

The theme of discussion for the session was: *The risks posed by drone technology to both manned aircraft and individuals*. Topics included risks to aircraft, how permission for access should be sought, how drone misuse should be dealt with, and the effectiveness of counter-drone technologies at detecting, identifying and neutralising rogue drones.

It was in the context of this discussion that I spoke about how the irresponsible use of drones should be countered in different ways. I was trying to talk about the *misuse* of drones and how different types of misuse should be dealt with differently.

It is now very clear that I made a mistake saying this. My words were inappropriate. I got it wrong. I would like to apologise to any drone pilots, the vast majority of whom are extremely responsible, who have been offended by my remarks. I can assure you that we do not 'categorise' drone users and believe passionately in fair access to airspace for all users who abide by the rules. I will ensure the Committee understands this position.

At NATS we work closely with the drone pilot community and value their input enormously. Most are responsible pilots, and we are putting huge effort into ensuring they have the best and safest experience they can when they're flying. We do not want the many to be tarnished by the misdeeds of the few.

We have taken a number of pro-active measures to promote the safe use of drones, including the launch of the Drone Assist safety app, which now has more than 130,000 registered users, and the joint launch with the Civil Aviation Authority of a drone safety website [www.dronesafe.uk](http://www.dronesafe.uk) (<http://www.dronesafe.uk>).

NATS safely manages millions of flights in UK airspace every year; the existing safety management cultures and methods of operation that enable us to achieve this are equally applicable to keeping our skies safe with growing volumes of unmanned traffic. We are working hard, and we want to continue to cooperate closely with the drone pilot community on a range of solutions that will help us deliver that.

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