

# Royal Air Force **Strategy**

Delivering a World-Class Air Force



As the Royal Air Force looks to the next 100 years, we face unprecedented challenges and, for the first time in generations, we are growing...

...now is the time to define our strategy for the future.



CAS's Foreword

# Chief of the Air Staff's Foreword

The Royal Air Force provides full-spectrum air and space power, professionally, effectively and efficiently. Outstanding people are at the heart of everything we do.

In many ways we are in an enviable position with air power in constantly high operational demand, a highly talented, trained and motivated work force, a strong reputation for excellence and safety, and an opportunity to celebrate a major milestone in our history with our Centenary in 2018. On top of this, the Strategic Defence and Security Review in 2015 has given us the opportunity to grow the Royal Air Force for the first time in generations.

Our immediate challenges are to sustain this enviable position and to exploit the rare opportunity we have been given to grow the Royal Air Force. Our longer term challenge is to ensure that we can

continue to deliver decisive air power effect in an increasingly complex and contested environment.

The changes in the way Defence is managed over recent years mean that we now have much greater control over our budget and our future plans. So, although financial pressures will continue to bear on us, we now have greater freedom to reinvest savings we make back into the Royal Air Force.

The future will inevitably present us with new challenges as our enemies adapt and it becomes harder to retain and recruit the people we need, but we control the levers to address these problems.

The 2017 Royal Air Force Strategy sets out the future direction for the Royal Air Force. I own the Strategy but it has been developed by the Air Force



Board Executive, in consultation with a wide group of people from both inside and outside the Royal Air Force. It is the Strategy for the Royal Air Force, but its principles apply just as much to those in the Royal Air Force working with the other Services to deliver wider Defence outputs.

The Strategy is intended to inspire, inform and cohere. The audience for the Strategy is therefore broad. The Strategy will be used to guide and prioritise the work of the Royal Air Force over the next few years. It should be understood by

commanders and used by them to provide the unifying high-level purpose for their leadership. It will be the starting point for the Royal Air Force Command Plan and is coherent with National Security Strategy, Defence Strategic Direction and the Defence Plan.

The Strategy looks out to 2025 and beyond, although the detailed plans are focused on the next 5 years or so. Inevitably the world will not stand still and we will have to be flexible enough to adjust the details of the plan to ensure that it remains relevant and achievable, but the direction and approach will endure.

At its simplest our strategy is to:

- Focus on our people.
- Deliver on operations.
- Grow our front-line.





# The Royal Air Force Today

For almost a hundred years the Royal Air Force has defended the skies of Britain and projected Britain’s power and influence around the world. Today, the Royal Air Force remains at the heart of the Government’s approach to conflict and crisis management. We are heavily committed on operations at home and abroad, across the breadth of Defence outputs. This is not likely to change; the Royal Air Force will continue to be in high demand and play a central role in the security and prosperity of the Nation.

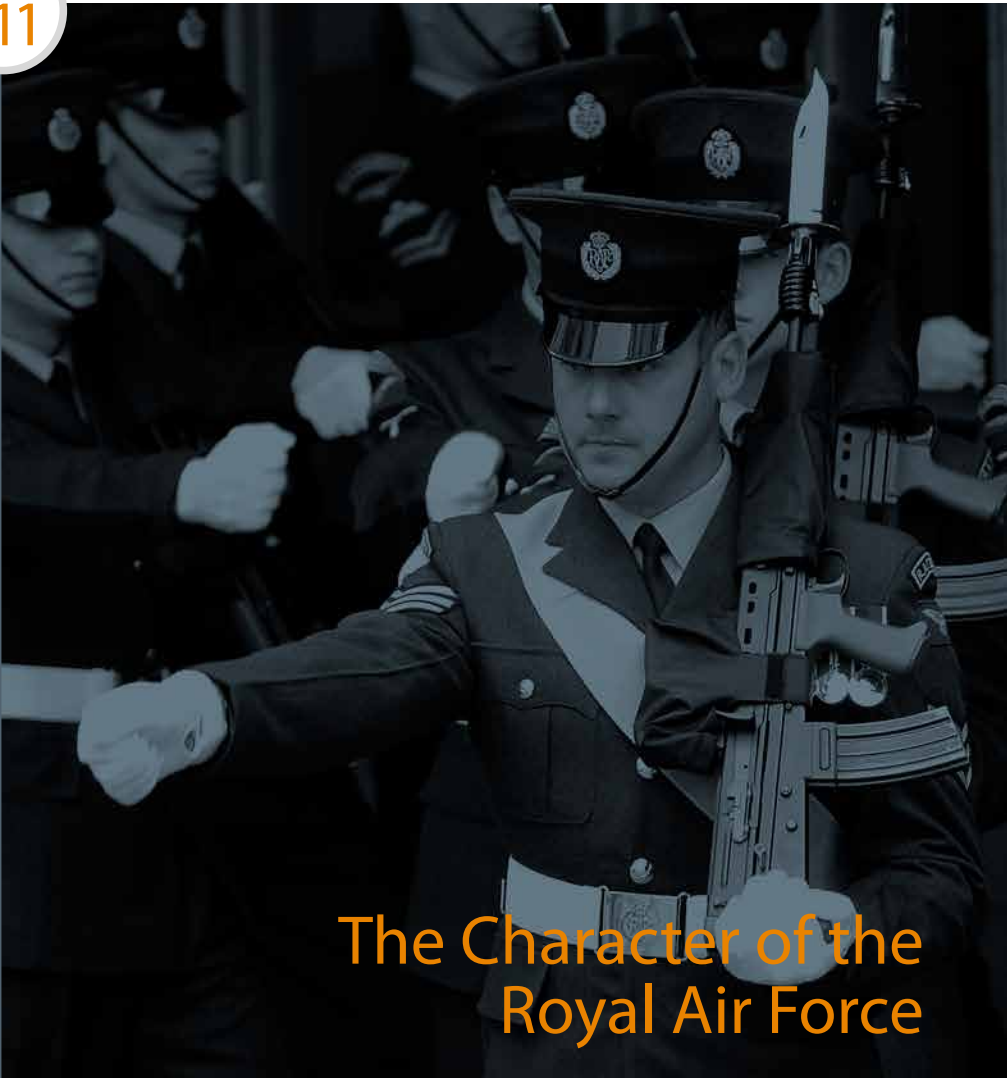


The Royal Air Force and our people are agile,  
adaptable and capable.



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The Character of the  
Royal Air Force

# The Character of the Royal Air Force

The Royal Air Force has a well-earned reputation for excellence in delivering air power. Working alongside, and often within the other Services, we offer political choice, global agility and value for money to the UK Government. We have a proud history of success and we continue to lead the delivery and development of air and space power across the full range of global operations. We are inherently 'Joint' and international in our outlook and in the way we operate.

We are a Service that manages risks and operates safely within an inherently risky environment. We rely on and exploit technology and innovation, whilst recognising that fundamentally we are nothing without the enduring quality of our people. We offer opportunity for all and we are an organisation where ability is the determinant of individual success.



We are an organisation where ability is the determinant of individual success.

# The Character of our People



The Royal Air Force has a highly talented and motivated workforce which would be the envy of any organisation. Our people have a reputation for excellence and professionalism. We are well trained, qualified and educated, as well as innovative and intelligent. By the very nature of the air and space environment, we are pioneering in approach, pragmatic in delivery, courageous, fair and just.

Our people are agile, adaptable and capable – across the Whole Force. This makes the Royal Air Force an agile, adaptable and capable organisation.

We are well trained, qualified and educated as well as innovative and intelligent.



# The Context

The Royal Air Force has earned a reputation for delivering air and space power, and doing it well. This means that we are trusted to deliver on operations, trusted to operate safely, and trusted to manage our budget effectively.

The Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 invested in the Royal Air Force to enable us to grow

in size and capability. This is a clear demonstration of the value the Government places on air power. Delivering this planned growth will depend on us making savings elsewhere in our operation, to re-invest in a larger and more capable front-line.



# The Challenge

As we look forward to the future we face considerable challenges. We know that the successful delivery of air power relies on our people. Retaining the people we need and building a modern workforce will be vital to our continued success, but competition for the skills we need is growing fast. We cannot therefore rely just on previous approaches – we need to be prepared to question how we do our business and to adapt and change where necessary, to give ourselves the best prospect of success.

We also know that our adversaries and the future operating environment will present new challenges, fuelled by new technology and by the willingness of our enemies to fight in different ways. We will need to adapt to stay ahead of these potential threats. We need to deliver the technology and people for the **Next Generation Air Force.**





Harness the full potential of our people,  
our aircraft and our systems,  
wherever they are.



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The Strategy

# The Strategy

Against this background, our basic strategy is simple:

- Focus on our people.
- Deliver on operations.
- Grow our front-line.

There can be no higher priority than ensuring we have the people we need. By focussing relentlessly on our strategic workforce challenges, we will harness the full potential of our people and ensure that we retain and recruit the right people with the skills we need, both now and in the future. Our people work across Defence, but at every point they must continue to feel fully part of the Royal Air Force.

By continuing to deliver safely and effectively on operations, and by continuing to do well in managing our business, we will retain the trust and confidence of Government, which is vital if we are to exploit the freedoms and opportunities we have been given.

We must deliver on the commitments made in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 to grow the Royal Air Force’s capacity and capability. By delivering on the promises made we will reinforce our reputation for reliability and will encourage further investment in the future. Key to success will be making the planned savings to allow re-investment, but we must also identify new opportunities to improve our efficiency so that we can further exploit the freedoms we have been given and enhance our front-line capability even more.



# Our Ambition

In order to deliver the air power that the Government and the UK need there are some things we must continue to do well; these are our **enduring ambitions** which are to:



**People**

Sustain, retain, attract and recruit the motivated and capable people we need.



**Capability**

Be a world-class Air Force that delivers the air and space capability for the UK.




**Excellence**

Maintain excellence in delivering on operations, managing our resources and operating safely.


In overcoming the challenges of the future, we will need to adapt and change. Our goal is to:

Harness the full potential of our people, our aircraft and our systems.


If we are to achieve this goal our ambition must be to:




Broaden our appeal and attract the very best from across society




Transform our structures and processes to remove unnecessary constraints




Become a modern, flexible employer of choice to meet the needs of our people and their families now and in the future




Become more inclusive and diverse




Deliver an 'offer' that supports and protects the essential and unique characteristics of the Royal Air Force



Transform our training to make it as relevant, effective and efficient as possible



Regain control of our estate and restore our reputation for owning good infrastructure




Grow our capability, capacity and resilience



# Strategic Objectives

In order to deliver in these areas, the Royal Air Force Strategy has 5 top-level strategic objectives:




### Succeed on Operations

Generate and sustain delivery of battle-winning air and space power for UK and Coalition Commanders in line with the Defence Plan and which meets HMG's Intent.

01

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### Build a Workforce for the Future

Understand the evolving requirement; sustain, retain, attract and recruit the people we need; transform our people structures and training system; and reward, empower and motivate our people to unlock their full potential.

02

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### Grow Capacity and Resilience

Reinvest savings to deliver the capacity, capability and resilience changes to the Royal Air Force as set out in SDSR 15; and set the conditions for further investment in the future.

03

24




### Deliver the Next Generation Air Force Capability

Become an integrated Air Force that recognises information is its lifeblood, with people, processes and practices that allow it to respond rapidly and decisively to changing threats at all levels of warfare.

04

25



### Operate Safely Deliver Efficiently Act Professionally

Ensure that risks to life are managed intelligently down to the level where they can be considered tolerable and as low as reasonably practicable; comply with appropriate standards of governance; and continuously improve efficiency.

05

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## Delivering the Strategy

To ensure development of the themes within the Strategy, the Chief of Air Staff and members of the Air Force Board Executive have established a plan of work, which will form part of the Royal Air Force Command Plan and which details how our 5 strategic objectives will be taken forward.

By embedding the Strategy in the Command Plan we will bring together all existing and planned programmes of work and help ensure the Royal Air Force achieves its ambition of building the Next Generation Air Force.



Information, Integration and Innovation.



Royal Air Force  
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Next Generation Air Force



## Next Generation Air Force

Succeeding on operations, growing the Royal Air Force, and building a workforce fit for the future will deliver a Royal Air Force fit for Joint Force 2025. But we need to do more. If we are to overcome the challenges we will face in the future operating environment and achieve our goal of harnessing the full potential of our people, our aircraft and our systems, we need to deliver the Next Generation Royal Air Force.

Our Next Generation Royal Air Force will need to fly and fight in an environment that will be more contested by agile and more capable enemies, prepared to fight ambiguous and 'hybrid' warfare, and more able than we have seen for a generation to challenge our strengths and exploit our vulnerabilities. We will need to continue to provide choices to the UK Government to combat these adversaries, but we will need to do so in an environment where the constraints placed on us by society and the law will, rightly, be more restrictive than those accepted by our potential adversaries.

Control of the air and space will remain essential to joint operational success. Our enemies will challenge us for that control, with widely available and highly capable air-defence systems, by exploiting easily accessible commercial off-the-shelf technology, and through an improving offensive cyber capability. Our adversaries will take advantage of new and rapidly evolving opportunities to degrade our ability to conduct operations, but will also aim to limit our effectiveness by asymmetric means, including exploiting our vulnerabilities when we are on the ground. Our aircraft and systems will need to be able to operate in this increasingly contested and degraded environment and we must combat our adversaries' information and command and control systems.

Future conflicts will inevitably require us to work ever more closely with our international partners on operations. We will also need to collaborate more closely on equipment development and in training and exercising together. Understanding how we will fight together will require us to build



strong, effective relationships and experience at all levels. Our focus on Defence Engagement and international exercises through NATO, other multi-lateral organisations and bilaterally will need to grow.

Our aircraft and systems must be seamlessly integrated to allow the swift transfer and exploitation of information, rapid decision-making and timely delivery of effects. Information, connectivity and command and control will be central to our success. We must also exploit space-based capabilities and ensure cyber capability is an integral part of future operations. Success will be determined by rapid understanding

and swift joint action. We will therefore need to integrate our capabilities with those of the other Services better and train and exercise alongside each other more frequently and in more realistic scenarios.

Underpinning all elements of the Next Generation Royal Air Force will be our people. It is not just about having the right number of people with the right skills. It is also about how we think. In the ambiguous, data-rich and complex future operating environment our ability to think differently, challenge the status quo and innovate will be fundamental to success.

The Next Generation Royal Air Force is therefore about Information, Integration and Innovation, enabled by imaginative and innovative people.





# Thinking to Win

A successful innovation culture stems from a coherent and well communicated vision and strategy. This Strategy sets out the challenges ahead and will help to drive the focus for innovation. The Thinking to Win Programme is aligned with this Strategy and its effects will be felt across all our Strategic Objectives.

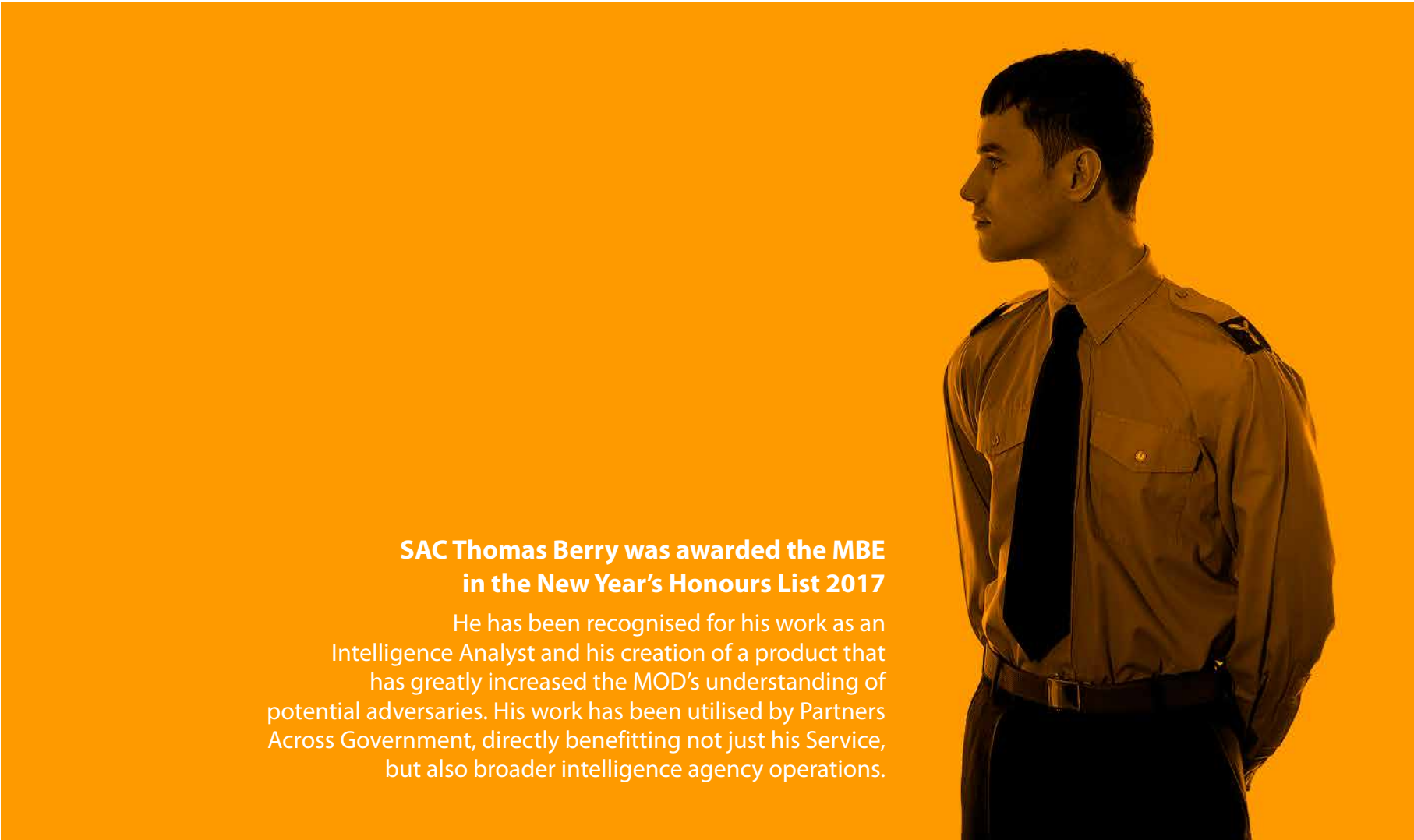
Delivering the Thinking to Win Programme will create an environment in the Royal Air Force where

innovation is considered business as usual, our thinking at the operational and strategic levels will be transformed, and the Whole Force will be able to understand and promote air power. Our objective is to ensure that we harness the immense thinking capacity of the Whole Force.

Our objective is to ensure that we harness the immense thinking capacity of the Whole Force.



THINKING TO WIN



**SAC Thomas Berry was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours List 2017**

He has been recognised for his work as an Intelligence Analyst and his creation of a product that has greatly increased the MOD's understanding of potential adversaries. His work has been utilised by Partners Across Government, directly benefitting not just his Service, but also broader intelligence agency operations.



# How We Will Succeed

Effective delivery of any strategy requires more than ambition and headline goals. The strategic objectives are designed to focus our work to deliver our strategy and the work plan provides more detailed direction.


There are a number of things that will be crucial to success:



Strategy 'Work Plan'

01

Objective




Succeed on Operations

Sub-Objectives:

- Continue to generate mandated outputs.
- Configure to sustain enduring operations by 2020.
- Optimise force readiness profiles.
- Set up a standing Air Ops Centre.
- Exploit the Whole Force.
- Maintain a balanced force across the full spectrum of capabilities.
- Sustain capabilities in order to deliver Joint Force 2025.

02

Objective




Build a Workforce fit for the Future

Sub-Objectives:

- Attract and retain the innovative, imaginative and diverse people we need.
- Broaden our appeal to become a more diverse and inclusive employer.
- Deliver an 'offer' that reflects RAF requirements.
- Rationalise manpower requirement and deliver an optimised Whole Force.
- Empower our people by delegating supervision and decision-making.
- Encourage innovation, sharpen our intellectual edge and promote good leadership.
- Increase flexibility to meet the needs of our people and their families.
- Transform training.
- Create Royal Auxiliary Air Force development plan.
- Enhance talent and career management across all ranks.

03

Objective




Grow Capacity and Resilience

Sub-Objectives:

- Improve understanding of cost base/drivers.
- Identify/pursue opportunities to increase revenue.
- Maximise RAF's share of Defence Innovation Fund.
- Re-balance/re-sequence Equipment Programme to create financial headroom in short term.
- Rationalise estate.
- Grow Combat Air capability.
- Exploit synthetics.
- Improve/integrate air and ground Command and Control.
- Improve/integrate Space Command and Control systems.
- Optimise strategic/tactical Air Mobility, including SF.
- Grow ISTAR and exploit extant capability.
- Increase space exploitation.
- Deliver/optmise Military Flying Training System.
- Reconfigure the workforce.

04

Objective




Deliver the Next Generation Air Force Capability

Sub-Objectives:

- Connect/integrate new and legacy capabilities.
- Introduce a rapid capability delivery approach.
- Manage information more effectively.
- Evolve Command and Control systems.
- Improve survivability and resilience of platforms.
- Develop new space-orientated capability, including Ballistic Missile Defence.
- Deliver Air-Cyber Capability Enhancement.
- Enhance inter-operability.
- Invest in synthetic capability.
- Sharpen intellectual edge and develop commanders able to operate in the Future Operating Environment.
- Better focus R&D/Strategic Force Development.
- Develop full spectrum effects.
- Empower and promote Thinking to Win.

05

Objective



Operate Safely, Deliver Efficiently, Act Professionally

Sub-Objectives:

- Comply with higher-level safety regulations.
- Exploit Total Safety information.
- Promote a Total Safety Culture.
- Ensure staff are Suitably Qualified and Experienced People trained for their role.
- Manage Safety hazards and risks.
- Promote safety in materiel design and manufacture.
- Promote safety in materiel maintenance.
- Supervise and control our activities.
- Investigate and learn from incidents and accidents.
- Respond to emergencies, accidents and incidents.
- Manage the RAF Safety Management System assurance process.

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# The Strategy

## Our Purpose

To deliver Air and Space Power for the UK

## Our Goal

Harness the full potential of our people, our aircraft and our systems

## Our Strategy

Focus on our people. Deliver on operations. Grow our front-line.

## Our Objectives

Succeed on Operations 

Build a Workforce fit for the Future 

Grow Capacity and Resilience 

Deliver the Next Generation Air Force Capability 

Operate Safely, Deliver Efficiently and Act Professionally 

## We will succeed through

Using the full talents of our people

Diversity and inclusion

Challenging requirements and constraints

Information, Integration and Innovation

Interoperability and collaboration

Identifying and exploiting opportunities

Demonstrating progress for our people

## Our Culture

Professional, innovative, inherently joint and that values leadership and excellence

People who are trusted, agile, adaptable and capable



# Royal Air Force **Strategy**

Delivering a World-Class Air Force



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