

# DE&S 2025

Defence Equipment and Support  
Safety Strategy



# CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Delivering on safety	4
Safety enabled	5
Our collective attitudes and behaviours	6
Primary objective	7
Supporting objectives	8 - 11

# FOREWORD

**CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER**



**DIRECTOR  
ENGINEERING  
AND SAFETY**



## OUR VISION

We are delivery focused and safety driven.

We will always put safety at the forefront of our considerations. Safety must be ingrained in our mindset, be at the core of our decision making, and evident in DE&S' behaviours and attitudes.

We are aiming to eliminate fatalities, whilst enhancing capability. Our responsibility is to protect our colleagues working for and on behalf of DE&S, to ensure the equipment we buy and support is safe for the users of our equipment, and avoid harm to others effected by our operations.

Let's be clear - safety is the priority. Cost and schedule will not be prioritised over safety.

We must be rigorous in the way we consider safety. Fundamentally we must have a safety culture which ensures we are proactive in anticipating and mitigating safety challenges to prevent avoidable accidents.

**Sir Simon Bollom - DE&S CEO**

Our organisational values place safety at the forefront of our decision making, underpinned by effective knowledge management, a learning culture and positive action to improve safety performance. We are committed to advancing our safety culture which is fundamental to every aspect of our business. Our ambition with this safety strategy is to prevent all avoidable accidents and to preserve and protect the health of our colleagues by ensuring that safety is at the forefront of our decision making. We will build on our solid foundations for safety management to nurture a deep-rooted sense of ownership and empowerment to act on safety matters right across the organisation, in every function and every role. We will encourage everyone to have a voice and to exercise their personal responsibility on safety matters. We want our people, whatever their role or function, to speak up on their safety concerns, confident that they will be listened to without fear of criticism.

We will help by providing a clear focus on our safety performance by using insightful indicators to help us anticipate and proactively mitigate safety risks. We will translate our ambition into our everyday mind-set and ensure our processes, systems, and training inform our safety perspectives, considerations, and decisions.

Whilst we already have a strong safety culture, by implementing and embracing this strategy we will be able to enhance our effectiveness and our reputation on safety to match.

**Stephen Wilcock - Director Engineering and Safety**

## OUR AMBITION

To prevent all avoidable accidents and to preserve and protect the health of our colleagues.



## DELIVERING ON SAFETY

We are driven by our commitment to the people who place their trust in the solutions we deliver. Integral to that trust, is the moral duty to ensure we do not cause harm to those working for and on behalf of DE&S, the operators of our equipment, and others effected by our operations.

We cannot be complacent when considering safety - if potential conflicts between safety, cost, or schedule are identified, we will raise them early, be transparent with our clients on the implications, and proactively collaborate on the resolution. In DE&S we will always put safety first – our priority will be to use our collective skills and experience to anticipate and address safety challenges before any harm is caused.

We each have a duty of care to make this a reality. To measure success in delivering our ambition, we will use critical indicators against the following goals to assess our safety performance in delivery:

## DELIVERY GOALS

**Our Products,  
Systems,  
and Services (PSS)  
are safe to operate**



Our clients are not exposed to avoidable accidents and their health is protected because the PSS we provide is safe by design and our clients understand how to operate the PSS safely.

**We protect our  
colleagues**



We preserve and protect our colleagues' health, and we prevent fatalities and injuries to anyone affected by our activities.

**Compliant operations  
and products**



We always meet health and safety, and product safety, law and defence regulation.

## SAFETY ENABLED

To ensure DE&S is truly safety driven, our safety strategy is underpinned by seven enabling goals that put safety at the forefront of our decision-making.

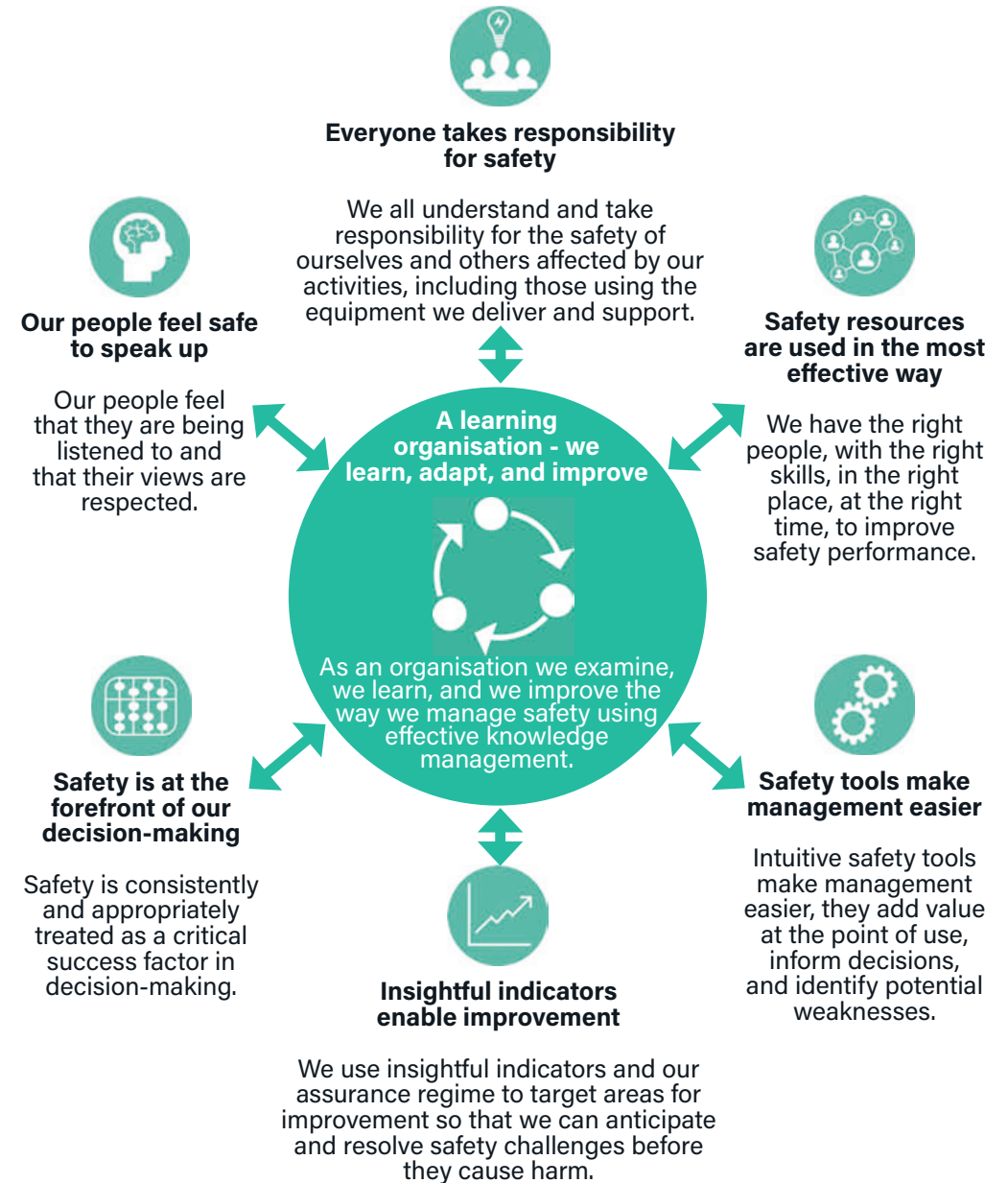
To be successful, we need an environment where people feel safe to speak up. Our strength lies with our people. This means everyone feels empowered to actively contribute, feel that they are being listened to and that their views are respected. Our ability to safely deliver complex programmes depends on a working environment that enables our people to innovate and challenge.

We need to nurture a deep-rooted sense of ownership and empowerment to encourage everyone to consider safety in every aspect of their work, and act on any safety concerns encountered, whatever function they are in or role they undertake. This will be complemented by agile and targeted use of safety practitioners and specialists, to ensure we use their knowledge and experience in the most effective way.

Our safety practices will only be truly effective when they are supported by tools that make tasks easier. Truly effective tools (including processes, systems and training) will help our people focus on safety matters by informing decisions and prompting actions that prevent foreseeable harm. We will use considered and targeted indicators to monitor the effectiveness of our tools so that we can focus on areas for improvement.

At the core of these enabling goals is DE&S' commitment to organisational learning, through effective knowledge management, which drives continuous improvement in the way we approach safety in delivery.

## ENABLING GOALS



## OUR COLLECTIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Safety must be ingrained in our mindset, be at the forefront of our decision-making, and evident in DE&S' attitudes and behaviours. Our organisation wide attitudes and behaviours will need to challenge us to go beyond the comfort of compliance, to embrace good practice, and to learn from experience. The following pillars set our expectation – the basis of a proactive safety culture for DE&S.

### A climate of trust

- There is an atmosphere of trust, and we talk openly about safety.
- Diversity of view is sought and encouraged.
- Everyone is given fair opportunity to speak, feeling safe to question and challenge safety are part of everyday work conversations, confident that their voice will be heard.
- Our people feel comfortable to speak up when they have a concern - internal feedback and reporting feeds out learning.
- Decision makers are empowered and supported to stop if there are safety concerns.

### Safety is everyone's responsibility

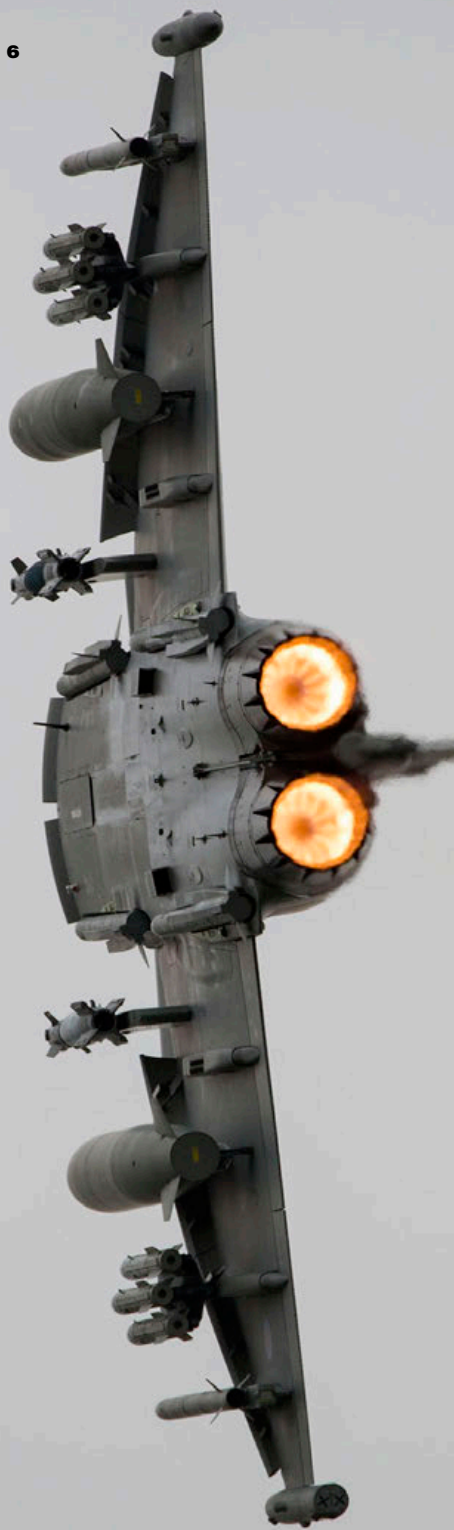
- We all understand and take responsibility for the safety of ourselves and others.
- Everyone understands the safety implications of their decisions and actions.
- Everyone is provided with the right tools to positively contribute to the continuous improvement of safety.
- All our people are responsible, but clear delegations show who is accountable.
- We are all proactive about identifying and making improvements.

### We are a learning organisation

- We routinely question why we are doing things, not just what, where, when, and how we are doing things.
- Policy and standards are continually developed to capture corporate learning.
- Learning points are shared and exploited across domains and functions as standard.
- We recognise what our safety data is telling us, and act on it.
- We apply Plan-Do-Check-Act and seek to test our assumptions.
- Our governance and assurance activities are supported by metrics that focus on performance improvement.

### All leaders are role models

- Our Executive Committee set the 'tone from the top' through strong leadership, actions, messaging, expectations, and examples.
- Safe thinking is evident in strategic direction, organisational changes, and decision making.
- All leaders use their own behaviours and actions to promote a proactive safety culture among their people.
- All leaders actively listen to what they are being told and respond appropriately.
- All leaders seek independent or alternative views to verify, challenge, and improve our safety performance.





## OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:

### Unify our safety management and governance arrangements

**By 2024:** We will have a unified safety management system for DE&S which defines the framework needed to be truly proactive in the delivery of our safety vision and ambition.

**By 2025:** We will achieve ISO 45001 certification - a globally recognised standard for a health and safety management system, which supports organisations to demonstrably provide safe and healthy workplaces, by preventing work-related injury and ill health, as well as proactively improving safety performance.

#### We will establish a unified DE&S safety management system by:

- Integrating and strengthening our current management systems for occupational health and safety, and acquisition safety.
- Evolving our project-oriented acquisition safety management system approach towards a more integrated systems approach to safety.
- Consolidating approaches across sites, domains, functions, and specialisms to provide consistent good practice for safety management throughout DE&S.
- Challenging established practices to identify opportunities for improvement – bringing benefits for all.
- Establishing a single point of truth for all safety processes, guidance, training, and tools.
- Having a user-friendly system which supports all our people to understand and take responsibility for the safety of themselves and others.

#### The unified safety management system will include governance and assurance arrangements that:

- Further enables the CEO, as the Senior Duty Holder and accountable individual for DE&S, to actively own, communicate, and appropriately delegate governance arrangements across all our activities.
- Facilitate agile and targeted use of our safety practitioners and specialists, using their knowledge and experience to drive good practice, support key decisions, and improve safety performance.
- Proactively anticipate safety challenges so we do not cause those working for and on behalf of DE&S, the operators of our equipment, and others effected by our operations.
- Simplify shared learning and instil collaboration to improve safety performance so we learn, adapt, and improve together.
- Deliver a consistent, proportionate and balanced approach to assurance across the 1st, 2nd and 3rd lines of defence<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/orange-book?msclid=4a1f352cc08d11ec9dedd669aa8a7b26>

## SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES

Our supporting objectives are complementary activities that will enable the delivery of our primary objective.

### WE HAVE A PROACTIVE SAFETY INVESTIGATION CELL

**By Spring 2022:** We will establish a team of competent people who will proactively investigate un-safe conditions, near misses, and accidents (proportional to the nature of these occurrences) and identify opportunities to improve the arrangements we have in place to preserve and protect health and prevent avoidable accidents.

This means we will learn, adapt, and improve by:

- Analysing reported data to identify, and make recommendation to resolve, the root causes of occurrences that have the potential to cause harm to colleagues working for and on behalf of DE&S, and others effected by our operations.
- Explore trends in the reported data to anticipate, and therefore, resolve safety challenges before they happen.
- Taking forward investigation recommendations by clearly identified owners, who are held to account for delivery.



### OUR GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS ANTICIPATE AND TRACK SAFETY CHALLENGES

**By Winter 2022:** Our governance arrangements, and supporting business process, will be fully established to raise internal corrective actions, which are tracked on a DE&S safety dashboard.

This means we will effectively use our governance arrangements to anticipate and track significant safety challenges, so we proactively resolve them before any harm is caused.



### ALL VISITORS CLEARLY UNDERSTAND OUR SAFETY EXPECTATIONS

**By 2023:** We will have consistent safety messaging in site visitors' inductions.

This means all visitors to our sites receive appropriate and consistently presented induction training, which includes safety expectations, requirements, and emergency arrangements.



### INSIGHTFUL INDICATORS MONITOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR PRACTICES TO HIGHLIGHT AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT OR CORRECTIVE ACTION

**By 2023:** We will have an established set of insightful indicators, presented on our safety dashboard, that monitor the effectiveness of our practices and allow the identification of areas for improvement or corrective action.

This means we will:

- Gather the evidence behind our indicators via day-to-day activities, rather than additional reporting requirements.
- Use our indicators to stimulate open and honest conversation on the quality of the evidence, and therefore identify areas in need of improvement or corrective action.
- Gather Management Information (MI) on the quality of our Safety Cases rather than just measure they are in place.





## CLEAR LINES OF SAFETY DELEGATION

**By Spring 2023:** We will have a common, and published, safety delegation framework which defines the chain of safety accountability in DE&S.

This means we will have standardised, and visible, safety delegations across DE&S. The delegation framework will provide clarity on the competency requirement and assessment mechanism for those who hold safety delegations, including the associated training requirements.



## OUR EXPECTED SAFETY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS ARE EMBEDDED IN THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

**By Spring 2023:** Our expected safety attitudes and behaviours will be embedded in the following elements of employee experience:

- Induction material.
- People management learning.
- Senior Leadership learning programmes.

This means our expected safety attitudes and behaviours are communicated and reinforced as our people join and continue their career with DE&S.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IS UNDERSTOOD AND TREATED EQUALLY TO PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**By Spring 2023:** We will embed an organisational understanding of psychological health and safety. This will promote a psychologically safe workplace where people feel safe in speaking up about safety. This means we will have:

- A clear definition of psychological health and safety in DE&S.
- An organisation wide understanding of how a psychologically safe workplace enables us to be a learning organisation.
- DE&S will be aligned to ISO 45003 framework for managing psychological health in the workplace.



## READILY ACCESSIBLE SPECIALISTS INFORM POLICY AND PROVIDE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON CROSS-CUTTING SAFETY TOPICS

**By Spring 2023:** We will identify and publish a list of cross-cutting safety topics (e.g. noise, vibration, hazardous materials) and the corresponding safety specialists in DE&S who are the nominated subject matter experts.

This means DE&S will have easy access to safety specialists who can offer advice and guidance across our organisation. These specialists will also monitor and interpret the health and safety legal obligations, or product safety legal obligations, in their area of expertise to inform centralised DE&S policy.



## WE DEMONSTRABLY MEET OUR HEALTH AND SAFETY, AND PRODUCT SAFETY, LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

**By Spring 2023:** We will publish guidance on a common approach to compliance management, including a toolset to support DE&S to:

- Understand and communicate compliance requirements.
- Hold our suppliers to account in the delivery of their legal obligations.
- Identify, track, and resolve areas of potential non-compliance.
- Track actions required to ensure enduring compliance.

This means our processes, tools, and contracting mechanisms ensure we can demonstrably meet our health and safety, and product safety, legal obligations.



## EVERYONE IN DE&S HAS A PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT GOAL FOR SAFETY ENGAGEMENT

**By April 2023:** Everyone in DE&S will have a documented personal development goal, via MyHR, to engage in at least one event in our safety engagement portfolio. This portfolio will include a reinvigorated suite of Spotlight on Safety immersive dramas.

This means everyone in DE&S is given opportunities to actively engage in events that support them to:

- Understand and take responsibility for their own safety, and the safety of others.
- Feel confident to question and challenge safety as part of everyday work conversations.
- Understand the safety implications of their decisions and actions.
- Positively contribute and improve our safety performance.



## OUR PEOPLE UNDERSTAND AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS BY REPORTING UN-SAFE CONDITIONS, NEAR MISSES, AND ACCIDENTS

**By Autumn 2023:** We will have an improved safety reporting system.

This means un-safe conditions for our colleagues (including when our people are working at home), near misses, and accidents are easy to report and reported promptly in accordance with clear guidance and robust procedures – enabling us to learn, adapt, and improve.



## CLARITY ON OUR SAFETY APPROACH FOR EMERGING DIGITAL CAPABILITIES

**By Autumn 2023:** We will have undertaken a deep dive of our policies and procedures for the safety management of emerging digital capabilities, to ensure good practice is embedded.

This means we will have identified if, or how, our safety arrangements need to improve to cater for the latest technological developments, e.g. uncrewed equipment, autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, cyber resilience, data integrity.



## OUR PEOPLE FEEL SAFE AND ARE EMPOWERED TO QUESTION AND CHALLENGE

**By Autumn 2023:** We will provide a simplified method for anyone to raise safety concerns outside normal governance structure or our safety reporting system.

This means there is an easy way for anyone to raise a safety concern, particularly outside the chain of safety delegation – these concerns will be actively investigated.



## THE SAFETY MATURITY OF PROJECTS IS INCLUDED IN BUSINESS CASES

**By Autumn 2023:** The safety maturity of projects will be embedded in the templates and processes we use to produce associated business cases.

This means safety will be robustly considered, properly documented, and openly communicated in business decisions, alongside the requirement for resources and financial decisions.



## WE EXPLOIT AUDIT AND ASSURANCE ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE OUR COLLECTIVE SAFETY PERFORMANCE

**By Autumn 2023:** We will capture safety audit findings in an improved Business Management System (BMS) Audit Repository, which enables us to collate audit finding, track non-conformance reports and improvement notices, and identify themes and opportunities for improvement.

This means we will have established arrangements, with supporting process, in place to:

- Track and manage corrective actions and improvement notices.
- Identify and disseminate safety lessons across DE&S for our collective benefit.
- Exploit the learning opportunities presented by activities such as internal and external audits and reviews.
- Identify themes to guide the continuous improvement in our safety management arrangements.



## CONSISTENT SAFETY APPROACH ACROSS DE&S

**By 2024:** We will have a single source of truth for safety messages, policies, processes, and tools across DE&S.

This means we provide clear and consistent safety messaging across the organisation.



## OUR MANAGEMENT APPROACH ENSURES SAFETY RESOURCE IS DISTRIBUTED FOR OPTIMAL EFFECT

**By Spring 2024:** We will have an established competency framework and management system in place to enable agile and targeted distribution of our safety resource.

This means we will ensure:

- Enough people in the roles which drive best practice and continuous improvement.
- A clear competency framework, underpinned by a suite of training, defined for safety practitioners and specialists.
- Safety roles at sites and embedded in delivery teams are filled by competent people.
- Safety is recognised as a crucial decision-making criteria.
- We undertake succession planning for our safety decision making roles.

