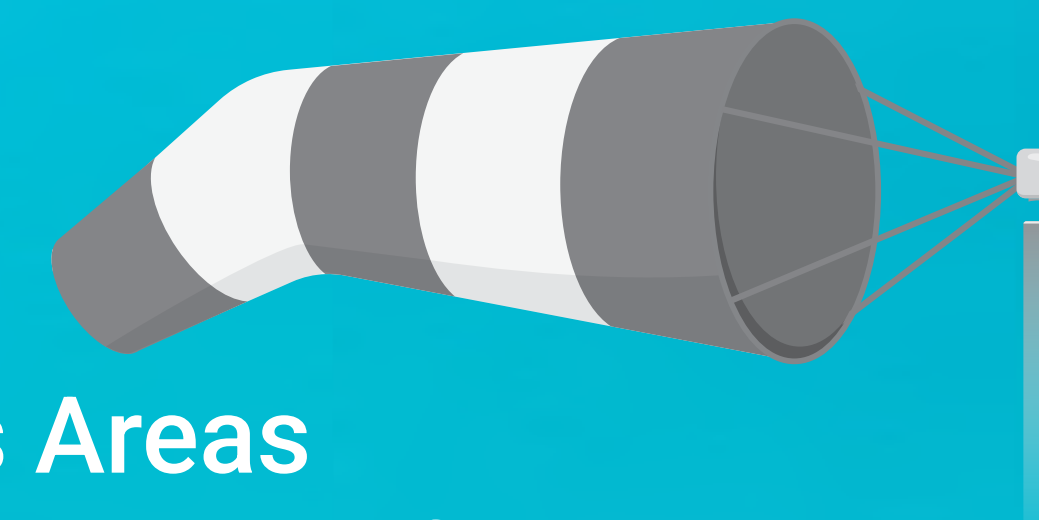# Our General Aviation Strategy

"Our General Aviation Strategy aims to address the unique needs and challenges of the GA sector, whilst ensuring that the broader goals of the CAA are effectively implemented."

Our GA Vision
A safe, innovative, and sustainable general aviation sector that thrives within a proportionate and supportive regulatory environment.

Our Values

- Do the right thing
- Never stop learning
- Respect everyone
- Build collaborative relationships

Our GA Strategic Focus Areas

> Effective and proportionate safety standards

> Reduce regulation where appropriate, increase delegation and improve proportionality

> Supporting innovation, sustainability, and enabling new technology

> Stakeholder engagement and delivering service excellence

Our General Aviation Strategy

> "Our General Aviation Strategy embeds the core principles of the overarching CAA Strategy and tailors them to address the unique needs and challenges of the GA sector, whilst ensuring that the broader goals of the CAA are effectively implemented within the context of the GA operating environment".

The General Aviation Unit (GAU) was formed 11 years ago to reduce the regulatory burden on the GA sector and much has been achieved in that time. We remain committed to the fundamental principles of:

> **Regulating in proportion to risk;**
> **Reducing regulation where appropriate; and**
> **Delegating where we can.**

The GA sector is an important part of the wider UK aviation industry that drives innovation, supports business, and provides a crucial entry point for individuals seeking a career in aviation. As such, promoting a safe, sustainable, and thriving GA sector is beneficial to the UK's wider interests.

The GA sector faces some notable challenges including declining flying hours, a stagnating number of recreational pilot licence holders, as well as an ageing fleet of aircraft. Additionally, transitioning to new technologies – such as advanced avionics, electric propulsion, sustainable fuel – presents challenges in terms of investment, training, and changes to regulation. However, these also present significant opportunities, including enhanced operational efficiency, improved safety, and greater sustainability, all of which could help to rejuvenate the sector. We are committed to removing barriers to growth and will continue to engage with the GA community to address the challenges facing the sector and harness the potential of emerging opportunities to reinvigorate UK GA.

The CAA's Growth Duty, combined with our commitment to the principles of the Better Regulation framework and the associated Regulators' Code, ensure that we consider the economic impact of our actions and remain proportionate in our decision-making to minimise regulatory burdens.

Safety remains paramount, and the GA policy framework supports this by ensuring that regulatory interventions are evaluated against criteria that uphold our statutory responsibilities while adhering to our fundamental principles.

Our Vision and Strategic Focus Areas

Our vision is a safe, innovative, and sustainable GA sector that thrives within a supportive and proportionate regulatory environment. To achieve this vision, we have identified four strategic focus areas:

1. **Effective and Proportionate Safety Standards**
2. **Reduce Regulation where Appropriate, Increase Delegation and Improve Proportionality**
3. **Supporting Innovation, Sustainability, and Enabling New Technology**
4. **Stakeholder Engagement and Delivering Service Excellence**

We are committed to working closely with the GA community to drive continuous improvements and seize opportunities for growth and development. The revised GA Strategy complements the wider CAA Strategy and supports the government's aviation ambitions and focus on economic growth. Our strategy is not bound by a specific timeframe and instead will be updated as and when required, ensuring we are agile and able to respond to change.

Effective and Proportionate Safety Standards

Aim:
To keep people safe, through a proactive, collaborative, and data-driven approach to deliver effective safety standards that are proportionate to risk.

Context:

Unlike commercial aviation, where operations are highly standardised and pilots are required to hold a professional licence, the GA sector includes a broad spectrum of individuals with varying experience levels, from novice pilots to seasoned aviators. This, combined with the wide variety of aircraft in use, creates challenges in providing consistent and proportionate oversight. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not suitable, and safety regulation must be flexible to accommodate the broad range of activities, experience, and risk levels.

Despite these challenges, the CAA remains committed to improving GA safety for those who actively participate in it and, above all, ensure the safety of third parties. Achieving this requires a proactive, collaborative, and data-driven approach to create a strong safety culture that leverages data insights and addresses emerging risks. Our Safety Risk Management (SRM) process helps us to identify, assess, and manage safety risks, while effective and proportionate oversight is underpinned by Performance Based Regulation (PBR).

Strategic Objectives:

> Maintain a dynamic, risk-based safety approach that identifies and assesses risks based on safety intelligence provided by GA pilots, organisations, and associations.

> Implement targeted and proportionate interventions to address significant safety issues as they emerge e.g. Loss of Control in-flight (LOC-I), runway excursions, and engine failures.

> Promote Just Culture within GA, encouraging continuous learning, transparency, and collaboration across the sector to address safety issues and share lessons learned.

> Produce and distribute safety guidance (e.g. Safety Sense Leaflets, Skyway Code, podcasts, animations, etc.) in collaboration with safety promotion partners to raise awareness of key safety issues and promote safe practices.

> Apply SRM principles to identify, assess, and manage emerging GA safety risks.

> Apply PBR principles to provide effective and proportionate oversight that focuses on outcomes rather than prescriptive rules and empowers organisations to determine how to meet safety objectives.

> Support the implementation of new technologies or working practices that will increase safety within the GA environment.

Reduce Regulation where Appropriate, Increase Delegation and Improve Proportionality

Aim:
Reduce and simplify GA regulation where appropriate, increase delegation where we can, and ensure GA regulation is proportionate to risk.

Context:

We are committed to creating a regulatory environment that supports growth and operational freedom, without compromising safety. This has been our approach since the GAU was formed in 2014 and it continues to drive our work going forward.

We aim to minimise the regulatory burden and ensure it is proportionate to the activity being undertaken. By identifying and eliminating overly prescriptive regulations, we can reduce costs and compliance complexities for GA operators without compromising safety. We will continue to assess the GA regulatory landscape in relation to operations, airworthiness, and licensing to identify opportunities for improvement.

A core element of our approach is the delegation of specific oversight responsibilities to approved organisations within the GA sector. By doing so, we empower those who are expert in GA products and operations to take ownership and act independently, enabling a more efficient and informed decision-making process that fosters greater accountability and ensures the specific needs of the GA sector are prioritised. We believe this approach enhances safety, innovation, and compliance.

Strategic Objectives:

> Streamline regulatory processes and create a proportionate regulatory framework for the GA sector.

> Engage with the GA community to identify opportunities to reduce and simplify regulation.

> Increase delegation of regulatory responsibilities to approved GA organisations, where appropriate.

> Collaborate with international aviation authorities to improve and harmonise GA regulatory practices.

Supporting Innovation, Sustainability, and Enabling New Technology

Aim:
Foster innovation, sustainability, and the adoption of cutting-edge technologies within the GA sector to enhance safety, promote growth, and reduce the environmental impact of GA.

Context:

We recognise the importance of encouraging innovation and adopting new technology to foster a thriving, forward-looking GA sector that can adapt to a changing environment. Additionally, as the push to reduce carbon emissions becomes more urgent, we believe the GA sector has an important role to play in helping develop environmentally sustainable technologies (e.g. new fuels, electric aircraft, hybrid/hydrogen propulsion) and successfully integrating them into UK aviation.

We are committed to creating a regulatory environment that supports controlled experimentation and the introduction of new technologies into the GA environment. In doing so, we aim to promote innovation without compromising safety. By leveraging the flexibility of novel regulatory constructs such as E Conditions, we offer industry a 'sandbox' for testing and refining promising new technologies, providing a pathway for them to be brought to market. Since its inception in 2014, E Conditions has enabled industry to test concept aircraft and novel technologies efficiently, fostering collaboration and innovation across the sector.

We believe innovation also has the potential to improve safety by making advanced, cost-effective technologies, traditionally found in larger aircraft, available to GA pilots and operators. We are therefore committed to supporting the development and deployment of portable, simplified avionics and other safety-enhancing technologies without introducing unnecessary regulatory burdens.

Strategic Objectives:

> Support the adoption of sustainable technologies like new fuels, electric aircraft, and hybrid propulsion to promote environmental sustainability within the GA sector.

> Promote the use of E Conditions to test new technologies and facilitate bringing them to market.

> Promote cost-effective, advanced safety-enhancing technologies for GA and make them accessible by removing/reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens.

> Strengthen partnerships with the GA sector to drive innovation, share knowledge, and address key safety and environmental challenges.

Stakeholder Engagement and Delivering Service Excellence

Aim:
Engage with the GA community in a collaborative and constructive manner, while delivering high-quality, accessible, and efficient services to GA stakeholders.

Context:

We recognise the importance of open and regular engagement with the GA community to understand their needs and views, which informs our policies and services. Effective stakeholder engagement is therefore central to our strategy and underpins each of our strategic focus areas. Our approach includes:

> **Strategic forums** for high-level discussions with GA associations and government (e.g. GA Partnership meeting and association-led events);

> **Tactical engagement** for collaboration on sector/association-specific issues (e.g. Air Display Symposia, Airworthiness Roadshows and focused stakeholder meetings); and

> **Outreach** to connect with the wider GA community and gather their views on specific issues (e.g. public consultations, working groups, and surveys).

We prioritise delivering high-quality, efficient, and accessible services that meet the diverse and dynamic needs of the GA community. We aim to provide accurate responses to stakeholder queries in a timely and transparent manner, fostering openness and trust. We also value stakeholder feedback to ensure our actions are informed by the community's views and support continuous improvement.

We also run targeted communication campaigns to raise awareness of emerging safety issues or promote key initiatives. These campaigns can be proactive or reactive and are tailored to optimise impact. They include Safety Sense leaflets, Clued-Up articles, podcasts, and animations. We also collaborate with external partners to extend the reach and effectiveness of safety messaging across the GA community.

Strategic Objectives:

> Foster collaboration with GA stakeholders through strategic forums, tactical discussions, and outreach to understand their needs and expectations.

> Provide high-quality, agile, and responsive services, ensuring timely and accurate responses to queries while building an environment of trust and transparency.

> Develop targeted communication campaigns to promote safety and raise awareness of key issues.

> Seek stakeholder feedback and use it to inform regulatory decisions and improve services.

> Facilitate ongoing education and engagement with the GA community to stay responsive to emerging issues and ensure continuous improvement.