



GA Strategy 2018-23

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# Introduction

In 2013 the General Aviation (GA) community and UK Government challenged the CAA around its work with GA to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens, and ensure that regulation is proportionate, accountable, consistent, transparent and targeted.

The aim of the forthcoming government aviation strategy is to achieve a safe, secure and sustainable aviation sector that meets the needs of consumers and of a global, outward-looking Britain. In concert with the supporting government ambition, the CAA, particularly in its public safety role in the protection of third parties, continues to concentrate on aviation safety, security, choice, value and fair treatment and better regulation. This GA strategy, compliments and supports both government and wider CAA strategy by detailing why we think this is the right approach to supporting and championing GA in the UK.

In 2013 the General Aviation (GA) community and UK Government challenged the CAA to substantially reduce regulatory cost and burden on the GA community. In 2014 the CAA responded by forming a dedicated GA Unit to make fundamental changes to the way the sector is regulated. A programme of work was launched, with many projects now complete and others underway or planned. Success so far includes:

- Clearer policies and reduction of red tape around pilot training
- Aircraft modification via a more proportionate system of airworthiness
- Review of the Air Navigation Order to enable a better regulatory system for GA
- The issue of the Skyway Code
- The creation of the first experimental category of operation in the UK – E conditions.

Whilst much has been achieved, there is still more to be done to achieve our goals of appropriate deregulation, comprehensive engagement of the GA community and Government, growing employment in the sector and an excellent infrastructure of airspace and airports for GA to use. Our vision continues to be that the UK should be a great place to fly with a flourishing GA sector and that we are influential in promoting this philosophy to the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

# The Future

Moving forward, we are committed to maintaining safety and to do so, we take a broad view of the total GA system including the people, the technology and the operating environment. The principles we have/will use are:

- Only regulate directly when necessary and do so proportionately
- Deregulate where we can and delegate where appropriate
- Do not gold plate and quickly and efficiently remove any gold plating that already exists



This GA Strategy shows how we will take the strategic priorities of the CAA and apply them across the GA sector, targeting GA issues and supporting the GA community. Therefore, we will publish and deliver an updated GA programme roadmap and communicate this progress regularly to the GA community, whilst at the same time measuring our performance to demonstrate our progress in the delivery of our projects and targets. This will include regular briefings and meetings with GA representatives such as the General and Business Aviation Strategic Forum (GBASF) and the GA Partnership.





# Our Vision



## Our vision for GA in 2023

Our vision continues to be that the UK should be a great place to fly with a flourishing GA sector and an influential voice in promoting our philosophy to EASA.

In formulating our forward strategy, our vision for GA in 2023 is:

- The Regulation of GA is proportionate and risk-based. The CAA's GA Unit will continue to ensure that the regulatory regime for the GA sector suits the activities taking place.
- Regulation of GA is evidence and risk-based and proportionate to the risk appetite of participants, while still protecting uninformed third parties.
- The CAA's GA Safety Review Panel effectively tracks GA safety risks, taking action where appropriate to manage any risks that cannot be tolerated.
- Time and costs are targeted to ensure that they are spent efficiently in enhancing the GA sector and maintaining safety.
- The GA community is performing its own regulatory activities where appropriate and where it has the capability, competency and willingness to do so.
- The CAA plays its part in contributing to GA as a thriving activity with growing employment enabled by minimised red tape and burden.
- Technological improvements to safety are embraced and not unnecessarily blocked or delayed by regulation.
- EASA views our approach as a successful, leading national aviation authority and seeks to adopt a similar approach across Europe.
- Specific safety issues and hotspots have been resolved or managed effectively, facilitated by the CAA.
- The CAA works closely with the GA community for the protection of the public.



**What have we achieved so far?**

Success so far includes reduction of red tape in various areas including: pilot training, aircraft ownership and modification, airfields and fuel.

**In the area of service excellence, we have:**

- Automatically accepted British Civil Airworthiness Requirements Supplemental Type Certificates (BCAR STCs).
- Streamlined the application process for display pilots and air display organisers.
- Simplified EASA revalidation requirements for balloon pilot licences.
- Saved maintenance organisations money by being able to list categories of aircraft rather than types in their approvals.
- Allowed aircraft types with poorly supported national Certificates of Airworthiness to transfer to Permits to Fly.
- Improved gyroplane pilot training
- Relaxed the 90-day pilot currency rule when a second pilot is present.

**In the areas of performance-based regulation we have:**

- Developed a policy framework for a transparent and proportionate approach to GA regulation.
- Deregulated the airworthiness requirements for single seat microlights.
- Developed BCARS A8-26 approval for sporting & recreational associations to allow greater delegation from CAA.
- Reviewed the Air Navigation Order (ANO) to provide greater clarity on rules and regulations for the GA community and to make it easier to delegate our responsibilities
- Removed the need to reweigh microlights every five years.
- Provided the framework for GA stakeholders to take greater responsibility for their areas of expertise.
- Introduced a more proportionate implementation of aerobatic ratings.
- Delegated some gyroplane airworthiness management and oversight to other organisations.
- Reviewed and streamlined the PPL and LAPL syllabus and course approvals making their delivery easier for non-complex ATOs.

Extending performance based oversight thinking to our business as usual oversight will further improve efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and proportionality towards our strategic objectives. To improve regulation of GA in the UK, we must first improve our own performance to ensure we meet our statutory obligations, protect the public and target risk efficiently without creating unnecessary burden or cost.



**In the area of empowering consumers, we have:**

- Allowed remunerated training in some group owned Annex II aircraft.
- Introduced a concession on the PPL flying medical to allow pilots to self-declare medical fitness to DVLA 1 - normal driving standard.
- Relaxed the rules for handheld radios to be used in aircraft, to enable the wider, easier and more economical use of radios.
- Allowed US/Canadian approved modifications to be made to UK-registered non-EASA aircraft without the need for a separate approval.
- Allowed pilots to hire gyroplanes from a club.
- Allowed pilot worn vision limiting devices rather than screens in instrument training.
- Increased the number of people allowed to share the cost of a flight.
- Deregulated balloon rating revalidations and raised the upper age limit for pilots.
- Developed the Safety Standards Acknowledgement and Consent framework to allow paid for flights in historic Permit to Fly aircraft.

**In the area of optimising infrastructure, we have:**

- Allowed the use of MOGAS fuel in aircraft where it is approved by the aircraft's flight manual.
- Removed the restriction that banned type approved gyroplanes from overflying built up areas.
- Introduced a new policy for instrument approaches at aerodromes without instrument runways or approach control.
- Introduced extra guidance for restoring vintage aircraft.
- Worked with NATS to reduce clutter on pilot charts.
- Facilitated the work of the Future Airspace Strategy VFR Implementation Group.
- Reviewed the periodic revalidation of military markings to allow historic aircraft to display their original military registrations.
- Allowed pilot controlled runway lighting at licensed aerodromes.

**Within the area of technology innovation, we have:**

- Created a wholly new experimental category of aircraft that gives more freedom to innovators.
- Provided the basis for a new ICAO gyroplane Certificate of Airworthiness.
- Aligned UK aircraft navigation equipment regulations with EASA.
- Supported aircraft owners by arranging part funding through EASA to fit 8.33Mhz radios.



**Achieving our vision**

# How will we achieve our future vision?

To improve regulation of GA in the UK, we must first improve our own performance to ensure we meet our statutory obligations, protect the public and target risk efficiently without creating unnecessary burden or cost.

## Challenging Ourselves

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A GA policy framework has been developed to ensure that we continue to fulfil our statutory duties as we deregulate, delegate and introduce proportionate regulation.

This helps us to ensure that we minimise the risks to those we are required to protect, that our regulation is consistent, and that we are not gold-plating European regulations.

We are focused primarily on protecting third parties from risks associated with GA activities, whilst enabling GA participants to manage their own risks. As we move forwards, we will not shy away from reflecting on the future format of the GA Unit itself, in terms of structure and culture as well as specific activities.

We will review the GA Policy Framework during 2019 to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

## Achieving Service Excellence

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We are committed to providing a responsive and efficient service for our customers. We believe that delivering on this is a key element of maintaining our relationship with the GA community.

The GA Unit covers a very large range of aircraft and organisations, which represents a significant challenge to deal with the associated approvals, oversight, permissions and authorisations – particularly during a period of regulatory change. Therefore, we will manage our resource to provide the optimum level of support to the GA community; this remains however, a significant challenge.

To meet this challenge, we will explore possibilities to reform systems such as Mandatory Occurrence Reports (MORs) and Investigation and Enforcement Team (IET) processes, and review whether systems are too complex (e.g. licensing, especially Part-FCL) proportionate (e.g. ATOs) and effective (e.g. pilot training under NPPL).

## Performance Based Regulation(PBR)

We will also improve our oversight methods by implementing PBR, which will:

- Co-ordinate and integrate oversight across all regulated areas.
- Enable our staff to have a full picture of the GA sector risks which will then drive resource allocation.
- Reduce the duplication of effort and give smarter, more targeted, compliance work.
- Allow oversight of areas not directly visible to the CAA or within our direct authority.
- Ensure our continuing review of policies is risk based and proportionate.
- Drive efficiency and effectiveness which will help to increase performance for the GA sector.

This work will continue to evolve over the coming years; the initial steps for the GA Unit will be to:

- Work on the GA element of the Regulatory Safety Management System whilst continuing to gather and analyse safety data to create an overall GA risk picture that will enable us to focus on sector risks to maintain the safety of the total GA system.
- Generate and utilise appropriate management information to inform policy changes.
- Ensure we are effective by using PBR to drive our regulatory activity.
- Develop GA Sectors under PBR to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our oversight activities.
- Ensure our people have the necessary training and skills and they are qualified for the tasks they undertake.
- Ensure that our processes and procedures are robust and our people are regulating to a common standard.



## Improving Intelligence

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The use of our leading safety indicators has assisted us in predicting where the risks lie and allowed us to take actions to target existing risks and tackle emerging issues. Our extensive use of PBR has aided us in understanding the regulatory landscape and focussed our efforts to target risk when required.

One thing still to improve in this area is the reporting of safety events via the occurrence reporting system. It is less commonly used in GA than in other sectors, particularly as other sources of data that are available to other sectors, such as Flight Data Monitoring and Air Traffic Control radar recordings are less available.

To improve this, we will continue to work closely with organisations such as GASCo to promote the use of both Mandatory Occurrence Reporting and confidential reporting via CHIRP, in addition to sharing our safety data with the GA community to provide evidence based safety promotion to support the GA community in targeting risks themselves.

## International Regulatory Relationships

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The Government, the CAA and the aviation industry have been clear that our collective preference is to remain a member of EASA once the UK withdraws from the European Union (EU). We will continue to work with EASA to contribute to rule making and policy and use our influence towards minimising compliance burden and cost for the GA community whilst continuing to protect safety, particularly of third parties.

We will do this by working in partnership with EASA and with stakeholder organisations and other European National Aviation Authorities. Our approach will recognise the different needs of the wide range of operations within GA such as balloons and gliders, and the different capabilities of industry organisations to perform safety functions for themselves.

There are opportunities to influence EASA, and explore options for effective delegation within the EASA system, for example to qualified entities. We will support, to the greatest extent possible, all the work of the EASA GA Roadmap. We will continue to play a key role within EASA to promote and support their new approach to GA to ensure the regulatory framework across Europe looks very different from the past.

Where we continue to have national regulatory powers such as over the Annex II aircraft fleet, we will use the opportunity to demonstrate effective regulation and provide an evidence base for EASA to consider wider adoption, e.g. changes to PPL medical standards. Working within our own legal framework allows a more flexible approach, for example increased levels of delegation to approved people or organisations, and we will continue to follow these principles, building on the evidence and feedback of our experience to date.

## Exit from the EU

Determining the future relationship is a matter for the UK Government in its negotiations with the EU. The CAA welcomes the ambition for aviation - including exploring participation in EASA - set out on 7 June 2018 and understands that the aviation industry and its consumers want as much clarity as possible with respect to the UK's future relationship with the EU. The CAA encourages the aviation and aerospace industries, and individuals who rely on EU permissions to operate (to any extent), to consider what actions (if any) may be required on their part to enable them to continue to operate. Whatever the outcome, the GAU Unit will continue to support the UK GA community through this period by providing technical support to government and participating where we can in representative international bodies.

## Human factors

The GA Unit will support and play an integral part in the overall CAA Human Factors (HF) strategy. We will ensure that HF is promoted for the overall benefit of the GA community through our various stakeholder engagement events and other GA focussed media.

“I think we have contributed to making the CAA more open, transparent and accessible to the GA industry and we will continue to do so”

**John Wickenden, GA Unit**



# The GA Environment

# Improving the GA Environment

We are committed to supporting improvements to enhance the capabilities of those involved in GA, enabling the uptake of technology and development of the Operational Environment.

## Empowering Consumers

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As the GA community take more ownership and management of their own risks, we will offer support in making this transition, promoting successful self-management through industry organisations. We will provide guidance and monitor these safety activities, setting the regulatory framework, and being ready to intervene when necessary – especially when the public need to be protected from third party risk. We believe there are varied expectations of safety and service from members of the public. For example, some don't want to be overflowed by sport and recreational aircraft. Their expectations should be managed appropriately and they should be informed of the risks so that they can make their own decisions about taking GA flights.

## Optimising Infrastructure

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We work within the legal and policy framework set by Parliament and the Secretary of State to develop long-term strategies for UK airspace and consider requests by airports and air traffic control organisations to change the structure of UK airspace. The future of UK airspace is being developed through the Airspace Modernisation Strategy which is being worked on by the CAA's Future Airspace Team. The GA Unit will ensure that all GA work will align with this strategy as it develops.

We will work to ensure that the decision-making process for airspace changes is strong and transparent, employs evidence as appropriate and involves consultation with affected groups to ensure a fair balancing of rights, responsibilities and interests.

We will co-ordinate this with the CAA-wide planned review of UK airspace classifications and air traffic services provision, to provide a safe and secure operating environment that meets EASA regulations as they are implemented, such as the air traffic management Implementing Regulation.

We will encourage and support innovative progress within the GA sector and continue to challenge ourselves to ensure we are taking the most effective regulatory approach. The GA Unit will seek to influence wider CAA decisions and work that may affect the GA community.

## Keeping pace with technical innovation

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Many new technical innovations continue to emerge that will benefit GA. Our regulatory approach to airworthiness and operational issues must remain proportionate and we will facilitate safe adoption of new technologies without unnecessary delay caused by regulation. We will review regulatory experiences in other States and reassess how we approve manufacturing organisations, and whether recognition of foreign design codes could be simplified. Significant groundwork has already been laid, for example the launch of the new Experimental Category for aircraft. Much of this now lies in the work of EASA, so we will continue to support them in shaping proportionate certification requirements. The GA Unit will continue to innovate internally by driving through efficiencies in addition to streamlining procedures and processes.

A key example of this will be the adoption of Electronic Conspicuity devices. The CAA wishes to promote full Electronic Conspicuity in U.K. airspace in order to unlock safety benefits, save lives and enable future airspace design to accommodate better sharing and access among different users of airspace. This will include commercial, military, GA and future users such as UAVs and Spacecraft. As such, Electronic Conspicuity is a vital programme to aid the Government's and CAA's broader Airspace Modernisation Strategy.

Electronic conspicuity means the airspace user can 'sense all others and be seen by all others' by electronic or digital means. The CAA is not requiring a particular technology or supplier of technology. Although given global market, commercial and regulatory developments, we see ADS-B enabled and interoperable platforms as the most likely commonly adopted technology in the U.K. We do not rule out alternatives, but would expect them to be interoperable with ADS-B standards. The key point is that any technology used must be fully interoperable for the purpose of achieving the required outcome of 'sense all others and be seen by all others' by electronic or digital means.

We are not proposing an immediate general mandate to require all users to be fully electronically conspicuous. We will, however, use a rolling programme of highly focused mandates over the next few years to target particularly challenging volumes of airspace and choke points when making decisions on airspace change requests proposed by industry sponsors.

# Organisational development of planning and resourcing

We are not supported by government funding. Our challenge is to continue to support GA and provide good value for money, while avoiding cross subsidy from other areas of aviation.

As is required by government, the CAA is funded from the industry that it regulates, therefore, all of our services must be paid for by fees and charges levied against the aviation sector as a whole. With respect to GA, fees and charges will be subject to periodic review via public consultation and whilst the CAA recoups what it can, there are many services that GA either do not pay for or the CAA significantly under recovers against. Whilst this is good in terms of keeping the cost of GA down and helping promote the industry, it provides a challenging environment within which to work. Added to which, we are also discouraged from cross subsidising (using funds from one sector of the industry to pay for work undertaken for another sector). Therefore, it will be important for the GA community to brief the Commercial Air Transport (CAT) sector via the CAA Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) on the benefits to them of a safe and dynamic GA sector, supported by an effective GA Unit. This will quantify the GA value to the CAT sector should there be any financial support required from them in the future.

The GA Unit will continue to exploit opportunities, both internally and externally to ensure that the unit continues to be fully focussed on the GA sector. The GA unit will also consider its own structure and resource, in addition to how it operates within the CAA as a whole, and learn from other organisations to ensure that it is optimised to work with and support the GA community to the best of its ability.

## Parliamentary support

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on GA (APPG) promotes the objective – as set out by Government – of making the UK the best country in the world for GA and to stimulate interest in the sector.

The goal of the APPG is to ensure that GA inspires both current and future generations to take up science, technology, engineering and mathematics, thereby creating high-tech jobs and growth in all regions of our economy. The GA Unit, in its role as regulator, will continue to support the APPG in all aspects of its work in order to help achieve those aims.





**Conclusion**



## Conclusion

The CAA is committed to working with our partners in GA, EASA and other national authorities towards a UK GA sector that is vibrant, expanding and free of unnecessary regulatory burden, whilst remaining as safe as it is today.

The changes we have made so far have been well received by the GA community and the strategy for the next five years is to push forward and complete the rest of our change projects in line with the priorities and timelines in the GA Change Programme.

Our work with GA is already in transition to a new steady state of more streamlined, less burdensome regulation, with increased onus on delegation, where appropriate, by responsible GA organisations with CAA activity kept to a minimum. The principles used in developing this approach will be fully embedded in GA policy making, underpinned and evidenced by fit-for-purpose safety checks.

The GA Unit remains committed to the protection of public safety and there is increased confidence in the capability in the GA community to help achieve this. We will continue to work in partnership with GA and with EASA, monitor the results and be proactive in ensuring that public safety is not being compromised. The work of the GA Unit has achieved a step change and we will build on this momentum, promoting GA without onerous regulations but with actions that are proportionate and appropriate for GA stakeholders' operations.

The best solution lies in partnership, maturity of actions and the expert judgement and honesty of all those involved.

This GA strategy will continue to work on changes towards this goal and to embed these changes within the CAA and our stakeholders until it becomes the normal situation going forward.

# Our commitment

**We realise there is still much to be achieved and between now and 2023 we will:**

- Be proportionate and innovative in our approach.
- Support EASA in doing the same.
- Support, engage and work with the GA community to achieve progress.

**Finally, the principles we have used so far, and will continue to use are:**

- Only regulate directly when necessary and do so proportionately.
- Deregulate where we can.
- Delegate where appropriate.
- Do not gold plate and quickly and efficiently remove any gold plating that already exists.

## **Review**

This strategy will be subject to periodic review such that it continues to meet both the statutory requirements of government and also the needs of the GA community. If there are any comments or suggestions that you wish to raise, please raise them through the various GA Partnership organisations such that they can be reviewed at the earliest opportunity.