

Annual Safety Report 2025

NATS

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About NATS

NATS is the UK's leading provider of air traffic control services and our purpose is advancing aviation, keeping the skies safe. We currently handle over 2.6 million flights per calendar year in UK airspace.

NATS generates income from Air Traffic Control (ATC) and related services in the UK and overseas, mainly through NATS En Route (NERL) and NATS Services Ltd (NSL).

NERL is our main business and is the sole provider of ATC services for aircraft flying en route in UK airspace and the eastern part of the North Atlantic. NERL operates through a licence granted under the Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Act 2021 and is economically and safety regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The CAA also sets targets, and provides incentives, for service, and environmental performance.

NSL is the commercial arm of NATS and operates in contestable markets, servicing both UK and international customers. The UK Airports service currently provides ATC services to 15 major UK airports, as well as engineering support and airport optimisation services. Other UK business includes aeronautical information management, design and data services, digital tower services, consultancy and ATC training to airlines and airspace users.

International activity is focused on providing the same range of services to the Asia Pacific and Middle East markets, targeted to specific international airports and ANSPs. We have offices in Delhi, Dubai, Hong Kong and Singapore. Our Searidge Technologies subsidiary, based in Ottawa, Canada, provides digital towers and advanced airport solutions.



What's inside

This report addresses NATS' operational and occupational safety performance, focusing on safety of our services as well as the safety and wellbeing of our employees. The report includes performance and updates covering the 2025 calendar year.





Introduction

I'm extremely proud of our strong safety performance in 2025, especially considering we have handled an increase in flights of 2.9% when compared to 2024, and the changing traffic flows and patterns due to the unpredictable geo-political landscape.

Meeting all of our safety performance targets reflects the strength of our safety focus and culture at NATS, a culture which strengthens year after year through constant vigilance, discipline and commitment.

Our recent safety culture survey highlights this, and our employees' strong sense of personal responsibility for safety. Individuals understand why safety matters and the role that they play; that shared ownership is a strong foundation for a strong safety culture.

Events across the global aviation industry continue to remind us why proactive safety management remains essential, and why we never allow ourselves to become complacent. A key development to ensure this, is the publication of our Safety Plan, with the goal of zero major safety incidents with NATS material contribution by 2035. Launched internally last year, this will enable us to build on our success, anticipate future challenges, and continue to set the benchmark for safety as the industry evolves.

As we look ahead to the busy summer period, our focus remains clear - to keep prioritising safety as individuals and collectively, in every aspect of our business, safeguarding our colleagues and those who rely on us every day.

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Meeting all of our safety performance targets reflects the strength of our safety focus and culture at NATS.

Martin Rolfe

Chief Executive Officer



Introduction

NATS' safety performance continues to meet the highest standards, and is evidenced not just in the results, but also the attitude and culture of the entire organisation. Continuous inspection and improvement are the watchwords, and horizon scanning for risks and hazards in the future, or elsewhere in other countries and organisations, is a critical element of our safety outlook.

I was particularly impressed this year by the release of the new Safety Plan 2035, which takes a very different look at safety and risks. It not only provides a very clear depiction of where the organisation needs to focus, but also what it can do to mitigate those risks to a minimum.

I commend this report, but, more importantly, I commend the huge effort behind the excellent performance. Praise is due across the entire organisation, for it is very much a team effort, but I will single out Safety & Sustainability Director, Dave Curtis and his safety team for their sterling efforts this year and for building the foundations on which it is built.

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I was particularly impressed this year by the release of the new Safety Plan 2035, which takes a very different look at safety and risks.

Greg Bagwell

Safety Review Committee Chair

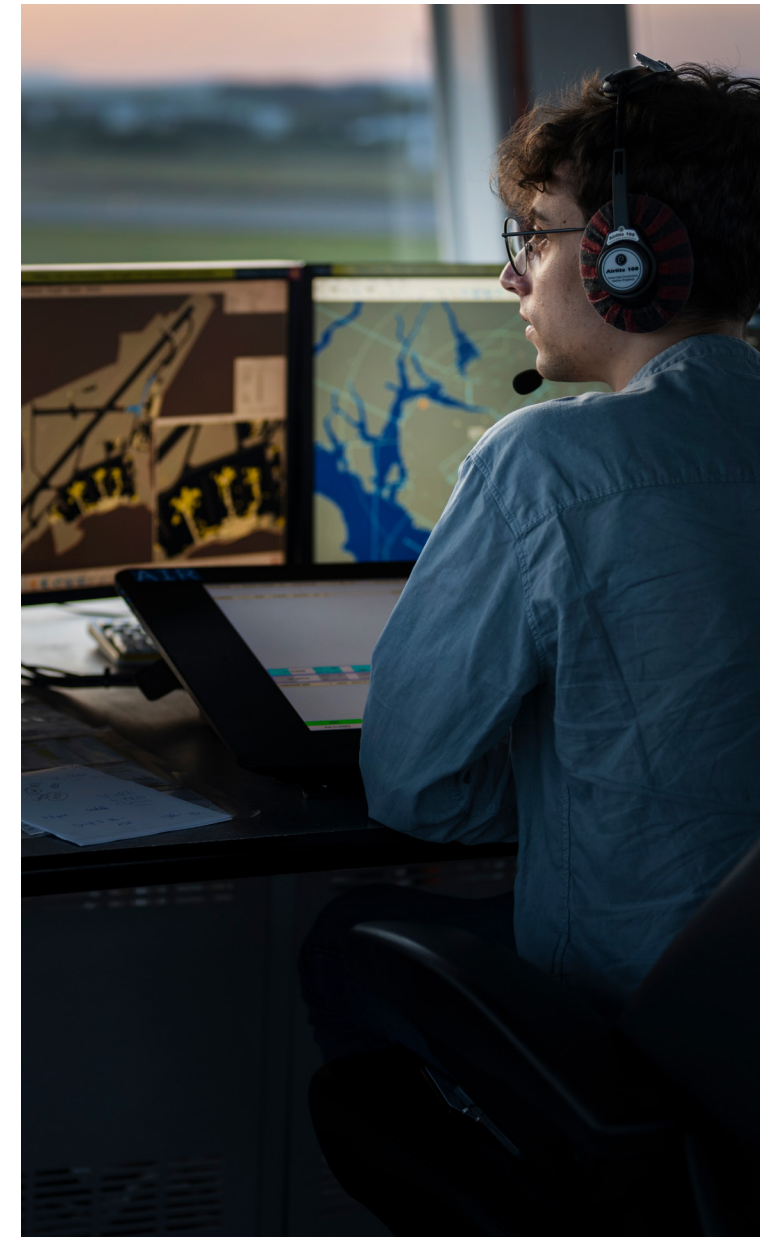


Introduction

The mid-air collision in Washington in January 2025 was a tragic reminder of why it's imperative that safety is at the forefront of our industry. Following the accident, NATS initiated several safety activities across NATS airports and London Terminal Control to ensure that lessons from the mid-air collision were promulgated and that our procedures involving Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) and Visual Flight Rules (VFR) traffic integration were safe, understood and applied.

Despite increasing traffic, and complexity due to geopolitically induced airspace closures, our safety performance continued to be strong. NATS met all five safety performance targets. We recorded zero NATS-attributable risk-bearing Airprox, reduced the loss of separation (LOS) rate relative to traffic, and saw only two NATS RAT A (Serious)/B (Major) events. This reflects an improvement compared with 2024, which recorded seven RAT A/B events, and a marked reduction against earlier reporting periods when the average was ten per year.

The launch of the NATS Safety Plan 2035 marked a major milestone, setting a clear path towards our goal of zero major safety incidents with NATS material contribution by 2035. Central to the Plan are seven adverse outcomes that provide a common framework for understanding how our operation could contribute to an aircraft accident, aligning risk management, safety benefits and investment decisions across the business.



Introduction

Risk-based oversight and independent review demonstrate that the Safety Management System (SMS) remains mature, fit for purpose and effectively applied, with findings predominantly administrative or governance in nature; a structured plan is in place to refine processes and oversight to improve usability and strengthen unit-level assurance. Regulatory oversight from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) continued across control centres, airports and delegated services, providing assurance of ongoing regulatory compliance, while highlighting the need for early preparation for emerging UK-EU regulatory divergence and its potential impact on future change and resource planning.

Technical systems and services continued to provide a safe, resilient foundation for operations. The most significant engineering incident in 2025 impacted London Area Control on 30 July causing ~21,000 minutes of delay. While engineering faults of this nature are rare and complex, controllers are trained to prioritise safety, and the incident was managed effectively, and with no losses of standard aircraft separation. A major internal investigation resulted in technical and procedural improvements designed to prevent the issue from recurring.

Each person's commitment to safety plays a crucial role in shaping our overall safety performance, with consequences that can affect not only ourselves but also our colleagues. Safety culture can sometimes be difficult to observe from within an organisation, so the aviation industry relies on

anonymous, confidential and independently administered safety culture surveys to provide a reliable and repeatable measure. These surveys typically explore employees' perceptions of management commitment, reporting systems, communication, and day-to-day safety behaviours. Our latest results showed strong employee awareness of our safety values, firmly grounded in personal responsibility.

Occupational Health & Safety (H&S) also saw substantial progress. Reporting increased significantly - reflecting heightened awareness and proactive identification of hazards - while injury rates remained well below industry averages. Updated corporate guidance, strengthened H&S support for our international teams and operations, additional training, and improved management system processes all contributed to safer workplaces. Independent ISO 45001 audits again confirmed the effectiveness of our H&S management system, and a campaign to boost reporting delivered a 41% increase in submissions, improving visibility of risk and enabling earlier intervention.

Human Factors and Wellbeing activity contributed strongly across the organisation in 2025, with specialists supporting over 40 major technology and airspace changes and embedding Human Error Safety Assessment (HESAP) within the SMS. Pilot studies using wearables and eye-tracking, alongside enhanced fatigue modelling and analysis of human-error themes, helped target improvements in training, tools and procedures.



2025 Highlights

+2.9%

Increase in air traffic levels across all NATS operations vs 2024



2

High severity (RAT A or B) events (better than target: 10)



+48.9%

Reported Health & Safety incidents



32.8

NATS RAT points per 100k movements (better than target: 52.3)



81.7

Overall RAT points per 100k movements (better than target: 110.5)



1

Reportable (RIDDOR) Injuries (within target: 2)



0

NATS-attributable Airprox A or B (= to target)



3.5

Losses of Separation (LOS) per 100k movements (better than target: 5.1)

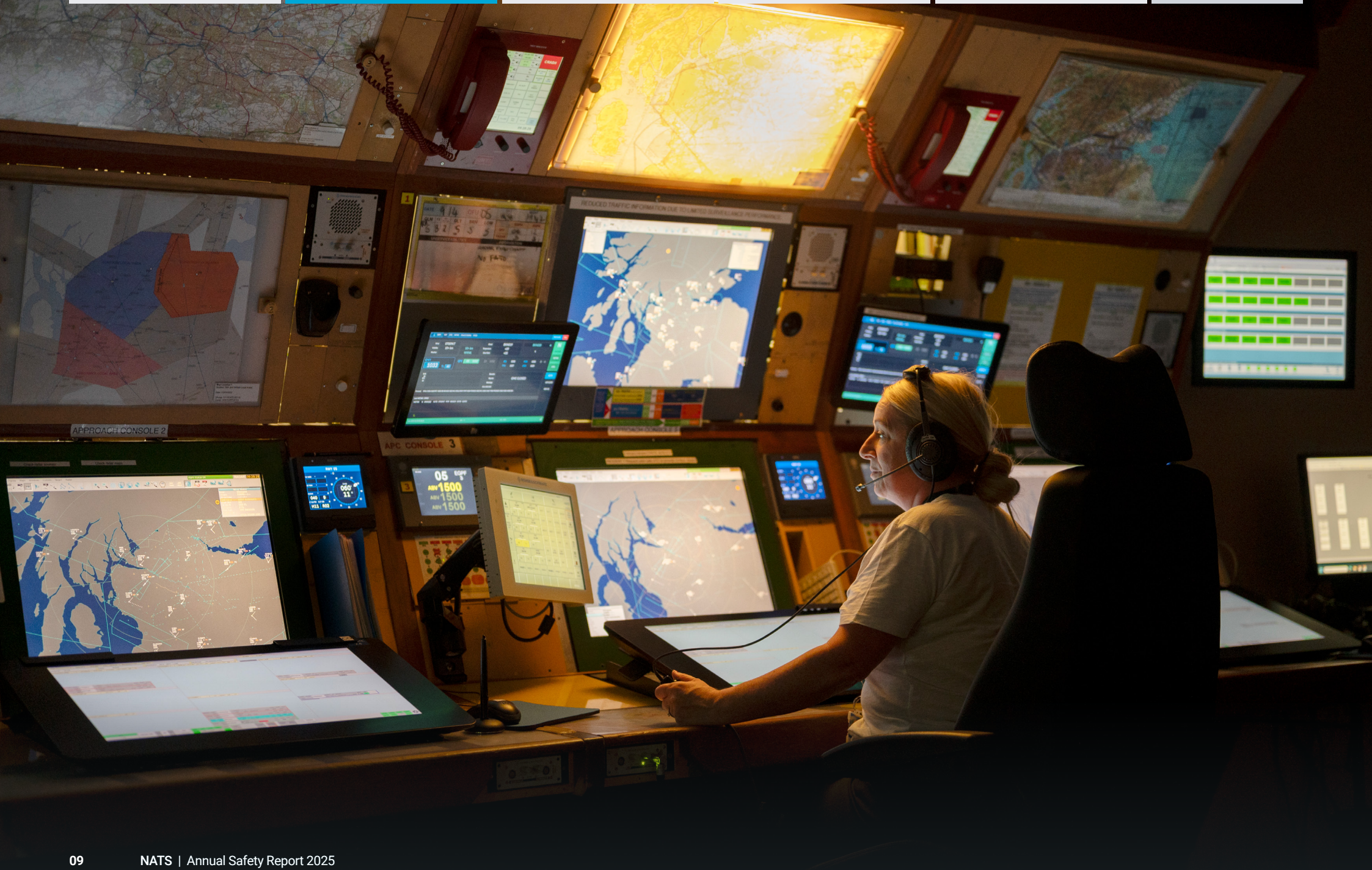


+26%

Peer Support interventions



All NATS Group safety metrics remain within target.





Safety Management Approach

Enhancing Safety Management: progress and future direction

A major milestone this year was the publication and launch of the NATS Safety Plan for 2035, developed to help us deliver our key corporate strategy goal of “zero major safety incidents with NATS material contribution by 2035”. The Plan sets out how we intend to build on our already strong performance, anticipate future challenges, and set the benchmark for aviation safety as the industry evolves.

The Safety Plan has formalised seven adverse outcomes which outline all the pathways through which our services could contribute to an aircraft accident. These provide a significant step towards a common safety language across the organisation and a consolidated framework for managing operational safety risk.

The Safety Plan will ensure safety benefits are more explicitly defined and tracked through our ATM (air traffic management) roadmap, a strategic, multi-year plan that defines how ATM capabilities, technologies, operational concepts and performance improvements will evolve over time. This will afford an improved understanding of how technology and operational changes build towards the corporate strategy goal. Leadership commitment, enhanced human performance, and increased operational resilience are at the heart of the Safety Plan, which will drive practical actions and targeted investments across the business.

From an SMS maturity perspective, we have maintained strong momentum. We completed the [CANSO Standard of Excellence \(SoE\)](#) SMS questionnaire, reaffirming our Level C maturity and bringing us closer to our ambition of achieving Level D across all study areas by 2028.

Our safety training offering has continued to expand, including the launch of a new change-focused safety assessment workshop for safety practitioners and stakeholders. This complements the growing suite of computer-based training modules, which help to support consistent and confident use of SMS processes across operational centres and airports.

We also commissioned an independent review of the NATS SMS this year. It confirmed that, overall, our SMS is strong, mature, and well aligned with industry standards, with the identified opportunities for further improvement validating our ongoing and planned work.

Lastly, we have focused on strengthening our safety culture through several key initiatives, including two reflective learning sessions based on the 2002 Überlingen mid-air collision. These explored the influence of systemic factors such as policy confusion, leadership challenges, and communication breakdowns and how they can be prevented. An internal Safety Community Day in December also strengthened safety collaboration, shared knowledge across teams, and reinforced our collective commitment to meeting future safety challenges.

Looking to the future

In the coming year, our focus will turn to implementing the Safety Plan and embedding consideration of the seven adverse outcomes throughout the organisation. Establishing clear governance, reporting arrangements, and assurance mechanisms for the activities driven by the Plan will be central to ensuring sustained progress.

One of the most significant developments will be the creation of a common set of hazards aligned to the seven adverse outcomes, followed in the longer term by the introduction of unit risk registers. Together, these changes represent the most substantial strategic evolution of the SMS since its inception. While this is ultimately expected to deliver considerable cost efficiencies for both the management of in-service risk and for assessment of change, more importantly they will provide a transparent, integrated and repeatable platform for risk discussions and prioritisation across the whole business.

In preparation for these major changes, we will continue to advance core SMS development activities. This includes simplifying and streamlining key processes, improving the usability and consistency of guidance and templates, and rationalising and strengthening our current structure for, and management of, safety accountabilities. These improvements will remove the unnecessary duplication that was accrued over many years of operating fragmented management systems prior to the introduction of our Business Management System (BMS – where company-wide processes are stored) and will ensure safety accountabilities and responsibilities are better understood and consistently applied.

We will also explore international adoption of the adverse outcomes model, collaborating with European and global partners with the long-term aim of establishing a common taxonomy and driving more effective cross-industry safety learning.





Driving safety management effectiveness

Assurance that safety is being managed in accordance with the SMS continues to be delivered through NATS' Risk-Based Oversight (RBO) framework, now in its third year of operation. Under this approach, oversight activity is planned using intelligence-led prioritisation based on risk profiles, safety performance indicators, organisational change, and the maturity of SMS implementation across units and business areas. The framework continues to test two core aspects:

- > Does the unit or business area follow the applicable safety processes?
- > Are those processes demonstrably effective in that environment?

Each business area remains subject to audit within a three-year cycle, supplemented by more frequent targeted reviews and support visits. During the 2025 reporting period, oversight work covered a broad mix of units including eight airports, alongside cross-unit SMS process reviews covering areas such as safety lesson learning, unit safety case maintenance, and air traffic control (ATC) procedures safety assessment. These activities provided good visibility of SMS performance across a wide range of operational environments.

The outcomes from these audits and support visits indicate that SMS processes remain in place and are effective, while also identifying areas where further refinement or greater consistency would add value. The re audit of Gatwick Airport, following its return to NATS, highlighted several improvement areas that are now being progressed, and Bristol Airport and others, showed a similar pattern, with the majority of actions completed and a small number still in hand.

Some findings relate to the design or clarity of SMS processes, some of which have been completed by the SMS team, and the remaining actions are in progress.

External oversight audits are carried out by the CAA at our centres and airports to review compliance against the regulations related to our Air Navigation Service Provision (ANSP) certification. In 2025, the centre audits resulted in six Level 2 findings, focused on the London

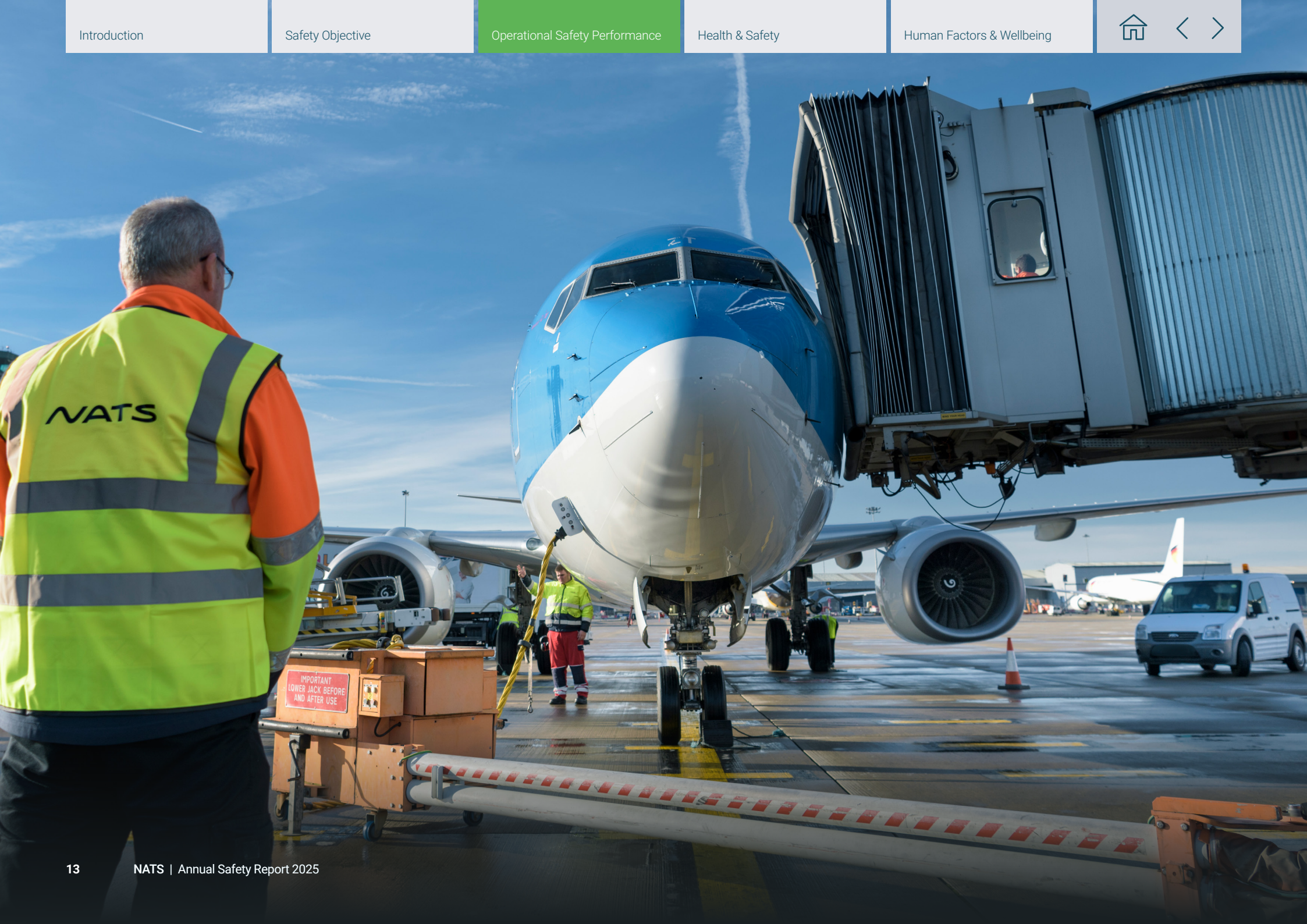
Area Control surveillance tracker failure; 17 audits were undertaken at airports, which identified 26 Level 2 findings. Level 2 findings represent non-compliances that require corrective action but do not have an immediate safety impact.

By comparison, in 2024, there were two 'en route' audits, which resulted in 14 Level 2 findings, and 41 airport audits which resulted in 70 Level 2 findings. This shows a slight proportional decrease in findings raised this year.

At an Accountable Manager meeting, the CAA stated: In terms of the CAA's performance assessment, the overall rating is considered to be at the upper end of "Good". A key strength highlighted was the constructive and effective engagement with NATS, which continues to deliver strong outcomes.

Following Brexit, NERL and NSL's provision of delegated Air Traffic Services (ATS) in EU airspace has been under the oversight of EASA. Delegated services are in place to improve management of traffic into and out of UK airspace from France, Ireland and the Netherlands, and to ensure the safe passage of helicopters to the UK's North Sea oil rigs, which are in UK waters but fall within the Icelandic or Norwegian Flight Information Regions (FIRs). EASA has undertaken annual oversight audits since 2021, visiting our Prestwick Centre in April 2025 and planning to visit Aberdeen Airport in April 2026. Since January 2023, the CAA has provided equivalent oversight of the French, Irish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Danish and Dutch ANSPs' ATS operations inside UK airspace.

Divergence between the UK and EU ATM regulations continues to be monitored, and substantial differences are starting to develop. For example, the attestation of technical equipment under the new EU conformity assessment framework will have a significant impact on procurement and change management, which may require additional resource. Oversight of delegated ATS was discussed at the UK-EU Specialised Committee on Aviation Safety with proposed areas for increased cooperation between UK CAA and EASA.



Safety Performance

Delivering safe air traffic services

NATS has a well-established approach to setting progressive safety performance targets, grounded in our policy of continual safety improvement. These are underpinned by a clear, evidence-based rationale, approved by the executive-level NATS Safety Group. By defining what “good” looks like, the organisation is aligned around common safety priorities, helping to maintain the right balance between safety and operational efficiency. Our safety targets are regularly reviewed in line with our regulatory price control cycles, as set by the CAA, and 2025 marks the midpoint of the NR23 regulatory period (2023-2027). While targets are set at the NATS Group level - covering both NERL and NSL - we monitor performance across all levels of the organisation to ensure a consistent method. A just and open reporting culture remains central to our approach. Strong reporting underpins the reliability of our safety data and reinforces confidence in how we measure and manage safety performance across NATS.

Target 1: The annual number of risk-bearing Airprox (assessed as A or B events) attributable to NATS

This measure is focused on Airprox, defined by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), as: a situation in which, in the opinion of a pilot or a controller, the distance between aircraft, as well as their relative positions and speed, as such that the safety of the aircraft involved was, or may have been, compromised.

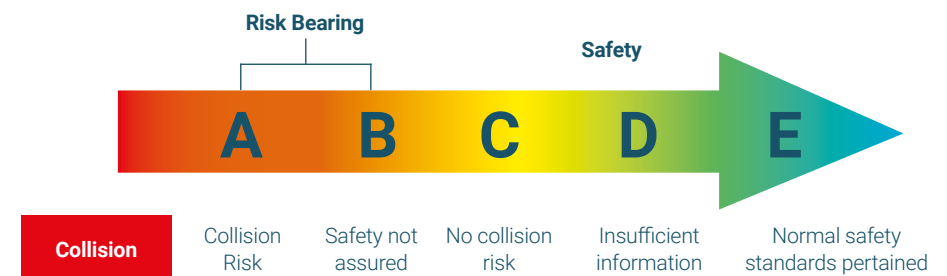
Airprox severities are assigned by the UK Airprox Board using the ICAO Airprox risk designation categories, where Category A and B incidents are referred to as risk-bearing:

- > Category A - Serious risk of collision existed
- > Category B - Safety of the aircraft compromised
- > Category C - No risk of collision
- > Category D - Insufficient information
- > Category E - Normal safety standards pertained

There were zero NATS-attributable risk-bearing Airprox in 2025 – meeting our target.



Target met
Target: 0





Safety Performance

Target 2: Annual number of Loss of Separation events per 100,000 movements

Targets 2, 4 and 5 are 12-month rolling totals per 100k flights based on historic averages (for years 2015 to 2019). The measures have been set as rates to help take into account the high correlation between the number of events and traffic levels. The 12-month rolling rate has been selected to even out the seasonal variations.

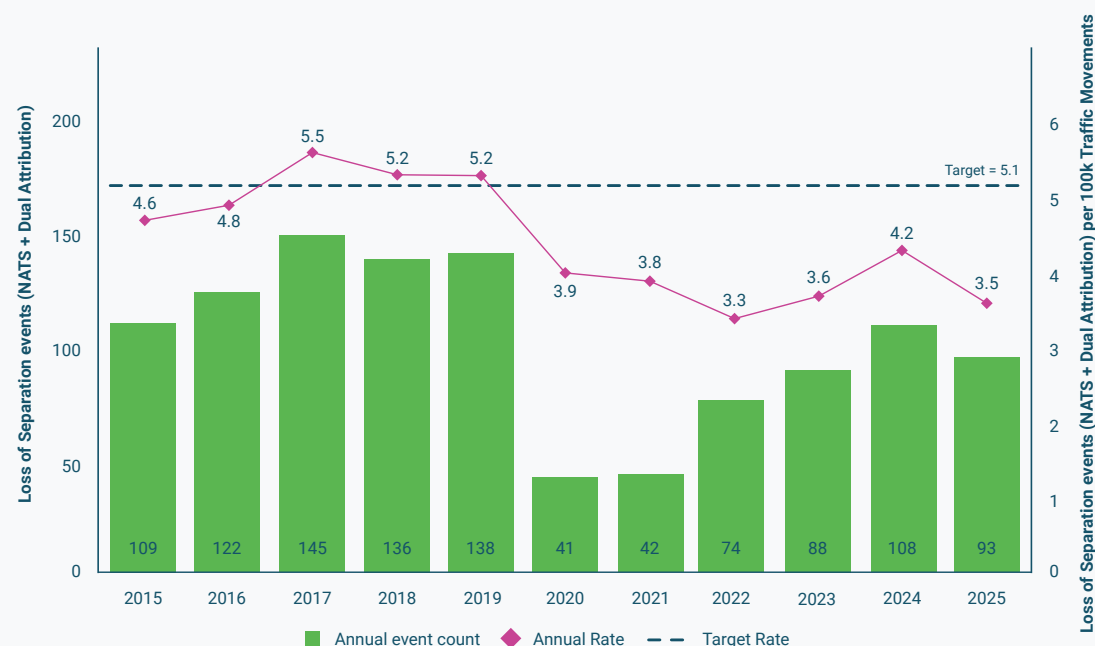
Aircraft are considered separated when either the horizontal or the vertical separation minima are met. For an event to be classified as a loss of separation, both must have been infringed (i.e. there is neither vertical nor horizontal separation between the aircraft).

A significant proportion of NATS' RAT points relate to losses, making this measure a key indicator to monitor. The 2025 figure shows a reduction in losses relative to traffic volume, signalling an overall improvement in safety performance. Our end-of-year result shows progress compared with our 2024 performance.



Target met
Target: ≤ 5.1

Loss of Separation events (NATS + Dual attribution) per 100k Traffic Movements



Safety Performance

Target 3: The annual number of NATS high severity RAT events (assessed as A or B events)

This measure is based on the Eurocontrol Risk Analysis Tool (RAT) classifications for quantifying the level of risk present in an ATM-related incident. The severity assessment provides a consistent and structured method for evaluating key risk elements including minimum separation, rate of closure, controller’s awareness of the traffic situation, controller’s plan to maintain separation, controller execution of that plan, pilot actions, and effectiveness of incident recovery measures such as TCAS (Traffic Collision Avoidance System) or GPWS (Ground Proximity Warning System) alerts. Unlike UKAB classifications - which rate the collision risk of an individual Airprox event - the RAT severity scheme evaluates the potential consequences of hazards on the safety of flight operations across a broader range of occurrences, informing organisational assurance and improvement activity.

This target specifically reflects the NATS contribution to an event. In contrast, Target 5 considers the overall RAT score, which combines the contributions of both the ANSP and third parties, for example, a situation involving correct pilot readback followed by incorrect action.

The classifications are defined as follows:

> A - Serious incident	A	B	C	E	D	N
> B - Major incident	Serious	Major	Significant	No Safety Effect	Not Determined	No Contribution
> C - Significant incident						
> E - No safety effect	>=31	30 to 18	17 to 10	9 to 1	RF too low	0
> D - Insufficient information to assess						
> N - No ANSP contribution to the event						

RAT scoring is undertaken by specialist investigators, and many events undergo moderation to ensure consistency across the organisation. The target is to maintain — or reduce — the number of RAT A and B events to fewer than 10, reflecting the average seen in a previous reporting period. In 2025, NATS recorded two RAT A/B events, achieving this target and representing a marked improvement compared with seven NATS RAT A/B events in 2024.

While all occurrences are investigated to the extent necessary, serious events receive additional scrutiny at the NATS Board-level Safety Review Committee. This ensures that recommendations and resulting mitigations are robust, proportionate, and effective in preventing recurrence.



Target met
Target: ≤10

Safety Performance

Target 4: Annual NATS-attributable RAT score per 100,000 movements

NATS is allocated RAT points by trained internal investigators where it is judged that NATS was either directly in the causal chain of an incident, or that air traffic management contributed to the level of risk experienced by the aircraft. Consequently, lower the number of RAT points indicate stronger safety performance.

As new standards evolve and the scoring methodology is refined, it can be appropriate to revisit historic events to ensure alignment with current expectations. Recent reviews have resulted in some historic events being rescored, increasing the total points allocated to 2024.

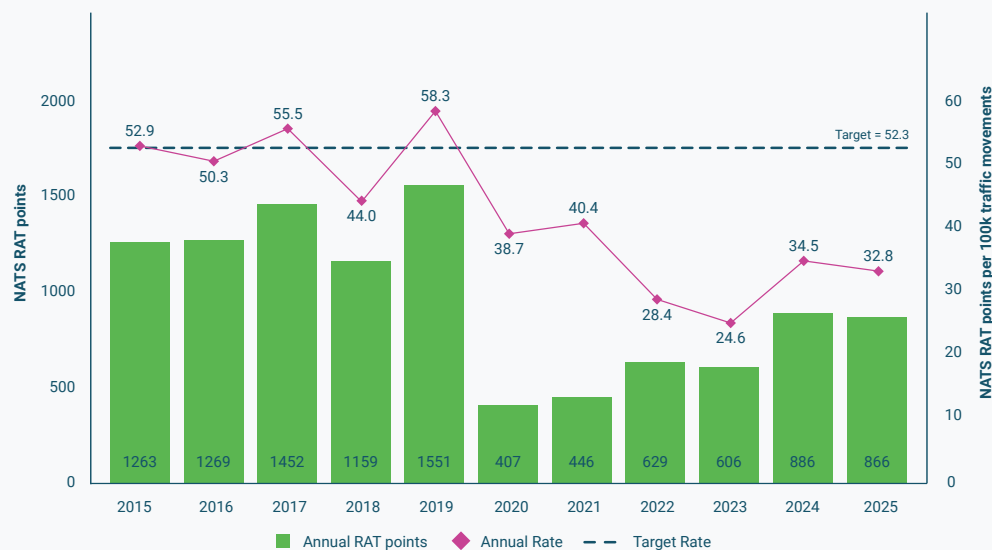
Despite this, the 2025 NATS RAT point rate remains among the strongest since the scheme's introduction in 2015. The rate has improved year on year, with reductions in both the number of losses and the NATS RAT points associated with them. A particularly notable improvement was seen within the London Terminal Control area, which manages the highly complex and congested airspace in the Southeast. This reflects the positive impact of the Terminal Control Working Group, which was established to identify best practices and drive targeted actions to prevent repeat incidents.

Smaller increases in NATS RAT points were observed in other units, including London Area Control and Prestwick Centre Domestic, as well as across airports, partly linked to the broadening of RAT scoring scope to incorporate runway safety events. Work is underway to assess whether the successful measures applied in the London Terminal Control unit, can be deployed across other units.



Target met
Target: ≤52.3

NATS RAT points per 100k Traffic Movements



Safety Performance

Target 5: Annual RAT score per 100,000 movements irrespective of attribution (the Overall RAT)

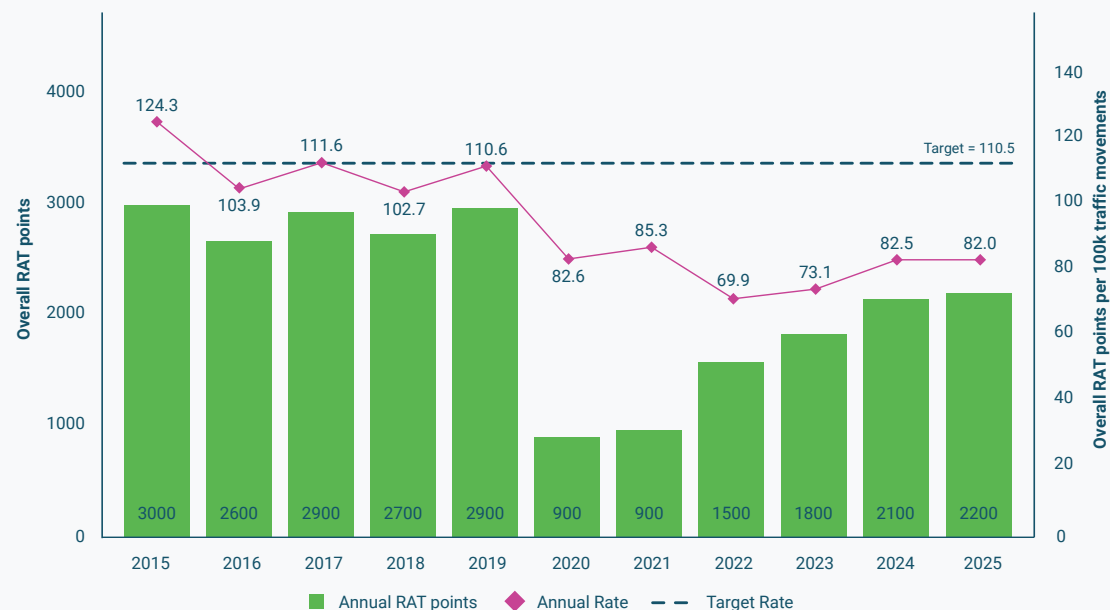
The Overall RAT performance reflects the combined NATS and non-NATS RAT points allocated to each incident. A reduction in the 12-month rolling Overall RAT rate indicates a corresponding reduction in risk across the ATM environment in the UK.

This year, the Overall RAT rate has improved compared to 2024 and remains within target. However, a deeper review of the underlying data shows an increase in airport-related incidents. Aligned with the Safety Plan commitments, a review of airports-based safety systems has been initiated alongside a programme of targeted improvement actions to ensure essential lessons are captured and acted upon.



Target met
Target: ≤ 110.5

Overall RAT points per 100k Traffic Movements



In 2025, NATS maintained a strong performance, meeting all five of the safety performance targets. In line with UK (EU) 2015/1018 – the UK Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR) regulation - NATS monitors a wide range of other indicators including runway incursions, Airprox and level busts. This ensures NATS is able to maintain a rich picture of aviation safety within the ATM sector and quickly identify emerging trends.



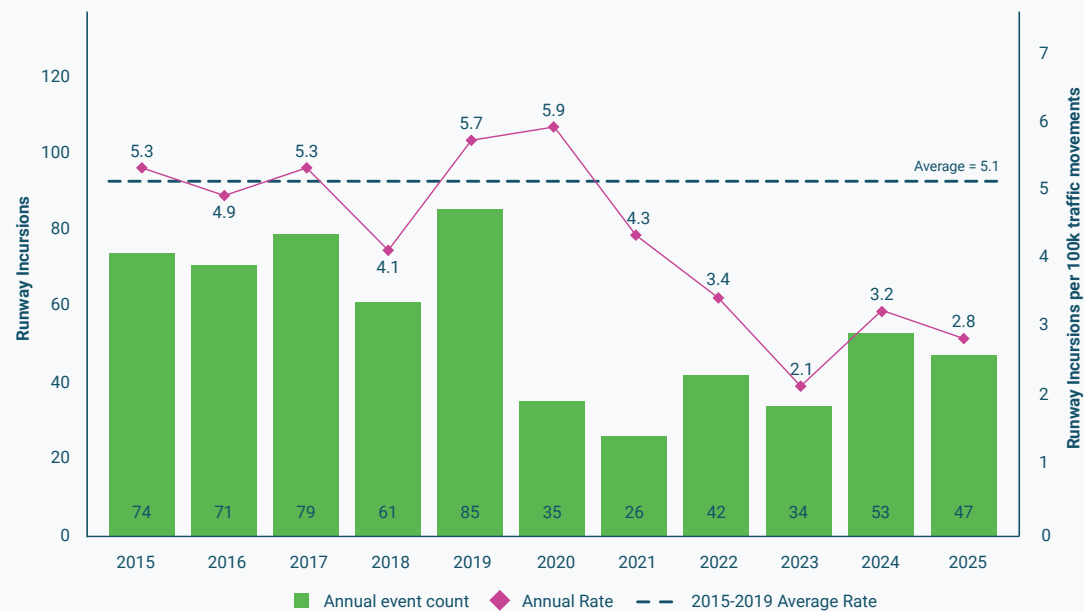
Safety Performance

Runway Incursions

A runway incursion is any occurrence at an aerodrome involving the incorrect presence of an aircraft, vehicle or person on the protected area of a surface designated for the landing and take-off of aircraft (ICAO Doc 4444). The incorrect presence may be a consequence of a failure of a pilot or vehicle driver to comply with a valid ATC clearance or their compliance with an inappropriate ATC clearance.

The NATS airports 12-month rolling runway incursion rate has reduced this year compared to the previous December, making it the second lowest figure on record for the last 10 years. However, the total number of NATS attributable events, and the number of NATS RAT points has increased compared to 2024; specifically, there was an increase in the number of events at Heathrow and Gatwick airports. To help reduce our contribution to the risk, NATS has deployed focused improvement activities, including the publication of lesson learning articles based on recent occurrences.

Runway Incursions per 100k Traffic Movements

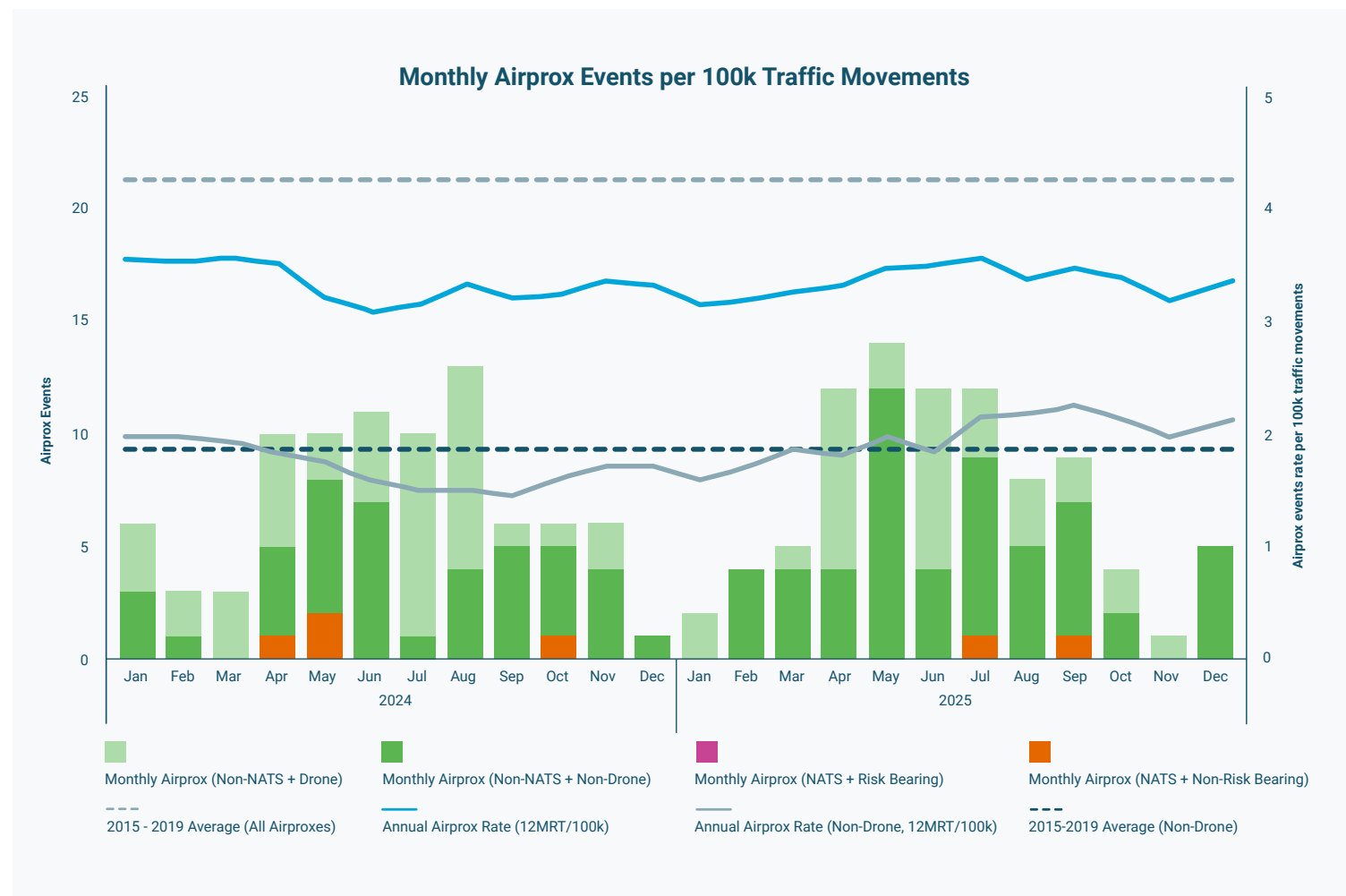




Safety Performance

Airprox

All Airprox reports are externally assessed by a panel of experienced civil and military aviator and controller voting members at the UK Airprox Board. The panel discuss and agree the Airprox causal factors as well as the degree of risk of collision, which is an important barometer of risk in the aviation sector.



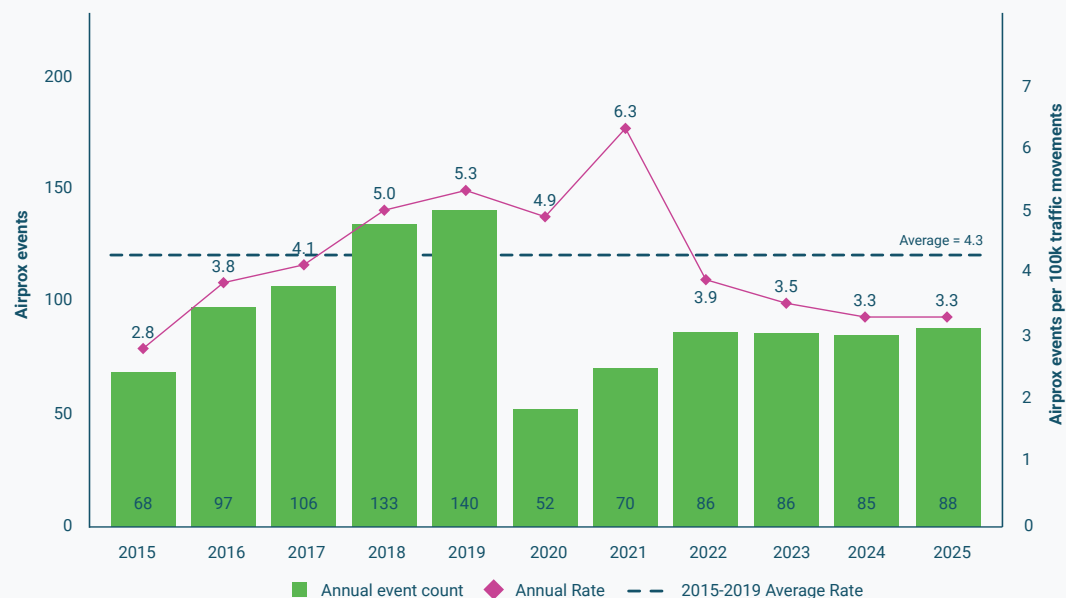


Safety Performance

The Airprox per 100k traffic movements chart shows that the 2025 rate has remained steady compared with last year's strong performance. We experienced a similar number of Airprox overall, with a significant proportion once again involving drones.

To safeguard the future of our airspace, NATS is focusing on developing the services and capabilities needed to accommodate emerging airspace users, including drones, advanced air mobility vehicles such as air taxis, and high-altitude or space-based operations. Successfully integrating these new operations with existing crewed aircraft will require substantial digitisation and automation, alongside close collaboration with other ANSPs pursuing the same goal.

Airprox events per 100k Traffic Movements

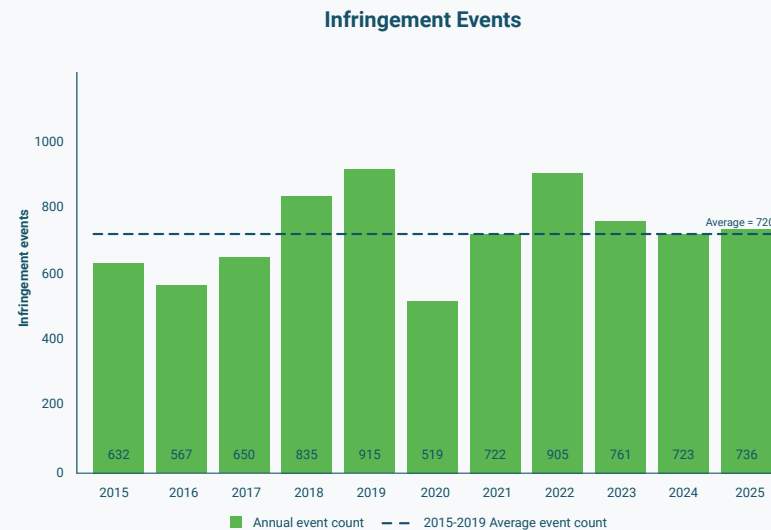




Safety Performance

Airspace Infringements

An airspace infringement occurs when an aircraft enters notified airspace without previously requesting and obtaining clearance from the controlling authority of that airspace, or enters the airspace under conditions that were not contained in the clearance. Notified airspace includes controlled airspace structures in ICAO airspace classes A to D, such as Airways, Terminal Control Areas (TMAs), Control Zones (CTRs) or Aerodrome Traffic Zones (ATZ) outside controlled airspace, as well as restricted airspaces such as danger areas, restricted areas, prohibited areas and temporary segregated/reserved areas.



Airspace infringements remain a significant safety hazard, with the potential to cause significant disruption, aircraft delays, loss of separation, and, in the very worst case, mid-air collision. This year, record-breaking sunshine and dry, stable, high-pressure conditions, strongly correlated with high numbers of General Aviation (GA) flights and there was a spike in infringements in March. Hotspot areas remain in line with historical trends around Farnborough, Luton, Southampton and Stansted airports. By anticipating these spikes in activity, NATS can produce targeted materials at specific times to help support the GA community and reinforce safe flying practices.

Where CAA-led Local Airspace Infringement Groups are established, NATS engages with these forums. Where possible, NATS contacts infringing pilots to collect information to support understanding of underlying causes of infringements. Insights gathered enable the development of focused safety improvements. NATS controllers also continue to use proactive and defensive controlling techniques to manage infringements effectively, proven by 0 NATS RAT points contribution to any losses caused by infringing events this year.

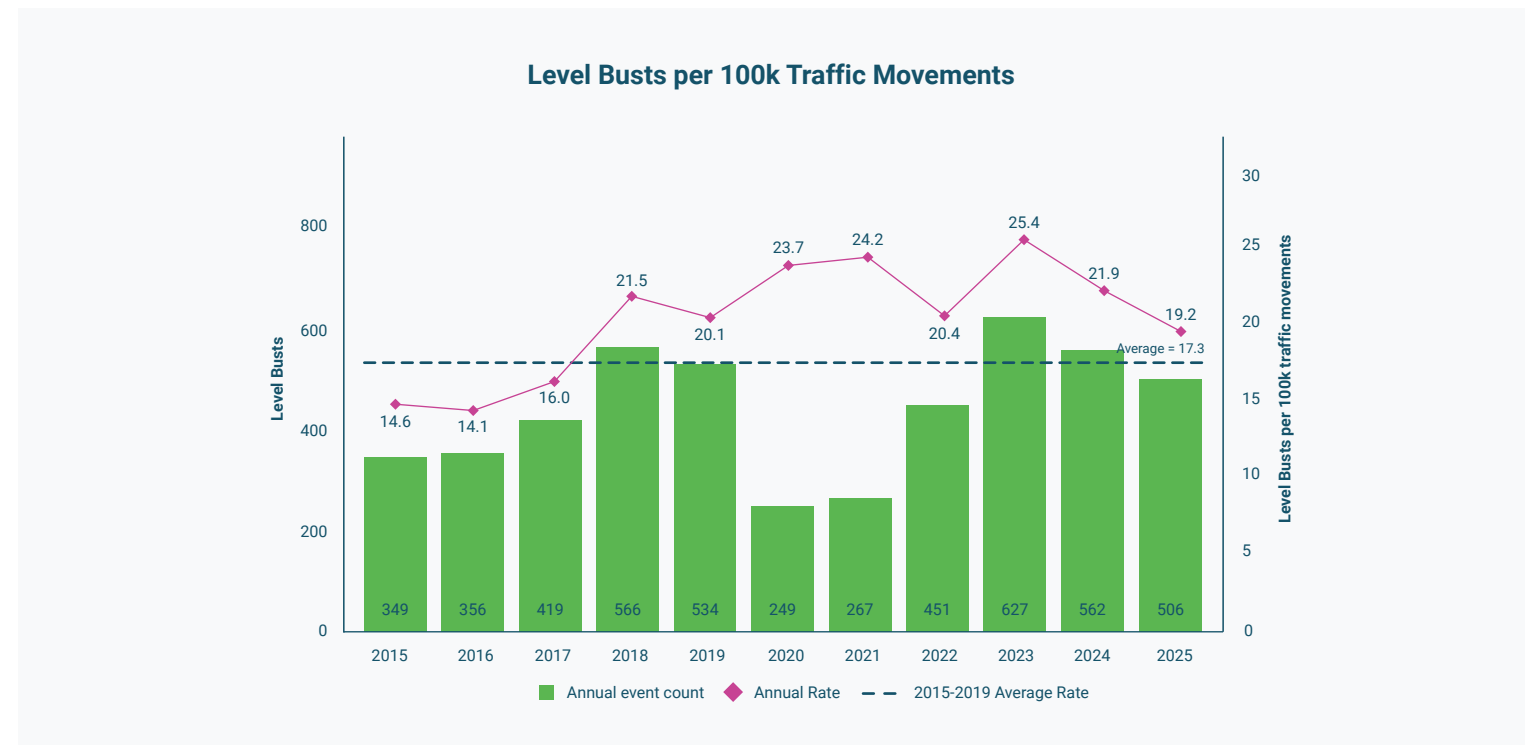
However, because infringements can create substantial disruption, particularly in busy areas such as the London approach sectors, this risk remains a significant external factor requiring continuous monitoring and management.



Safety Performance

Level Busts

A level bust or altitude deviation occurs when an aircraft fails to fly at their cleared flight level. Incident data indicates this most often occurs when the pilot correctly reads back a clearance but follows up with an incorrect action, or as a result of altimeter setting errors. In 2025, both the 12-month rolling rate and total of level busts have decreased compared to last year. Controllers continued to manage altitude deviations, though increased traffic complexity meant that losses associated with level busts are at their highest level since 2015 (Table 1). The NATS-CAA Level Bust Working Group has reviewed level bust data and proposed mitigations/actions, ultimately concluding that the risk associated with level busts remains low.



Level Bust related losses of separation by attribution

Attribution	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
NATS/Dual	4	1	5	3	8	4	2	3	4	8	8
Non-NATS	21	20	15	26	26	7	6	18	37	29	38
Total	25	21	20	29	34	11	8	21	41	37	46

Safety Performance

Air Traffic Management Technical Systems and Services

In 2025, NATS' ATC technical systems continued to provide safe, reliable support across both our en route operations and airport services. Despite increasing traffic levels, overall safety and service performance remained robust.

All engineering incidents are assessed using the engineering RAT scheme, which is different to the ATC RAT scheme. The engineering RAT is designed to classify the impact of technical issues on ATC's ability to continue providing safe services. This is a related, although different, RAT categorisation that is designed specifically for technical issues. High severity engineering failures don't necessarily mean that there was an unsafe situation, however, normal ATC operations may have had to adapt to maintain safe levels of service.

The most significant engineering incident was the radar tracker issue in London Area Control (LAC) on 30 July, which, although short in duration, caused widespread disruption including flight delays, diversions, and cancellations. Events of this nature are rare, and when they do occur, NATS treats them extremely seriously. The faults involved were both new and complex, and the subsequent internal investigation resulted in technical and procedural improvements designed to prevent the issue from recurring.

Importantly, NATS' response remained fully aligned with its statutory safety obligations, and thanks to swift and coordinated action by operational and engineering teams, no losses of standard aircraft separation occurred during the outage or subsequent recovery. The recommendations from the investigation strengthen NATS' operational and technical resilience, and lessons learned have been incorporated into our incident management structure and processes.

Throughout the year, we also advanced our technical Safety Culture programme, delivering refreshed training that focused on psychological safety and drew on relevant external case studies such as the Horizon Post Office IT incident to support open reporting, learning, and continuous improvement across the organisation.



Improving Performance

Sustaining a strong performance

Many factors contributed to the strong safety performance in 2025.

Safety reporting remained a fundamental foundation of our safety culture and continued to provide the evidence required for successful improvement initiatives.

In our en route operation, our lesson learning and communications focus shifted from more traditional 'Safety-I' principles (looking at an event after occurrence) to a 'Safety-II' approach (looking at what went well and how mitigations were used to stop an event from becoming more serious). The Safety Improvement team highlighted positive lessons and effective collaboration, reinforcing the 'Communicate' and 'Challenge' safety behaviours.

At our airport units, several initiatives were delivered with the aim to educate and upskill our operational staff. These included operational leadership training sessions, annual conferences and quarterly forums for Unit Safety and Competence Managers, and the development of capability frameworks for key safety roles.

We also sought out lessons from outside our own industry to further develop the safety culture across the organisation. This proactive work, which was undertaken ahead of summer 2025, reinforced positive safety behaviours and teamwork, alongside enhanced support mechanisms which effectively managed workload and risk.

Despite increased traffic and operational complexity, collaborative efforts across Service Delivery, Safety Improvement, and Competence teams led to improved safety performance. Proactive preparation, teamwork, and targeted interventions were key to managing risks. The experience of summer 2025 and the NATS Safety Plan 2035 will inform future planning, with a continued focus on embedding improvements and supporting safe operations in 2026.





Health & Safety

Ensuring Health & Safety (H&S) compliance and the safety of all has been our primary focus

Throughout 2025, NATS maintained good H&S performance, with very low injury and serious injury rates over the period. NATS averaged a rate of 5.5 injuries per 1000 employees, remaining well below published industry averages and giving additional confidence for meeting our commitment to provide safe places of work for staff and visitors.

During the year, there were a total of 497 (2024: 352) H&S incident reports, realising a 41% increase in overall reporting throughout the period in comparison to the previous year. This follows a sustained campaign to increase reporting awareness across NATS operations, including our contractors. In total, the number of work-related incident reports received was 431 (2024: 290), an overall increase of 49% on the previous reporting period.

2025 saw a measurable increase in proactive reporting, with positive reports, safety observations and close calls collectively rising by 40% (2024: 246 compared to 2025: 344). Increased early reporting gives NATS greater opportunities to identify risk and take action to prevent work-related injuries and ill health.

NATS 2025 H&S performance review highlighted a total of 28 non-lost time injuries (2024: 23) with a single lost time incident (2024: 4) reported under Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) (2024: 2 RIDDORs), which occurred at a non-NATS managed location.

Throughout the year, NATS has remained committed to providing safe and compliant places of work, with an approach that brings focus to Safe People, Safe Places, Safe Processes and Safe Plant (Equipment). During 2025, changes were made within the Group H&S function to focus competent resources on H&S management system processes, risk and assurance, Facilities Management (FM) and construction safety. These changes were essential to ensure the continued effectiveness and assurance of our management systems and processes, as well as driving forward with measurable improvements to H&S performance across all our workplaces.



Health & Safety

Using lessons learned to further develop H&S improvements

During 2025, we published updated corporate guidance on H&S training and extended the scope of our e-learning modules across the business to raise awareness. To improve H&S performance at our UK airports, a support programme focused on the development and roll-out of revised local H&S plans and site hazard logs. We are now extending that to our international teams, ensuring all NATS locations are supported by Safety Liaison Officers and international H&S plans.

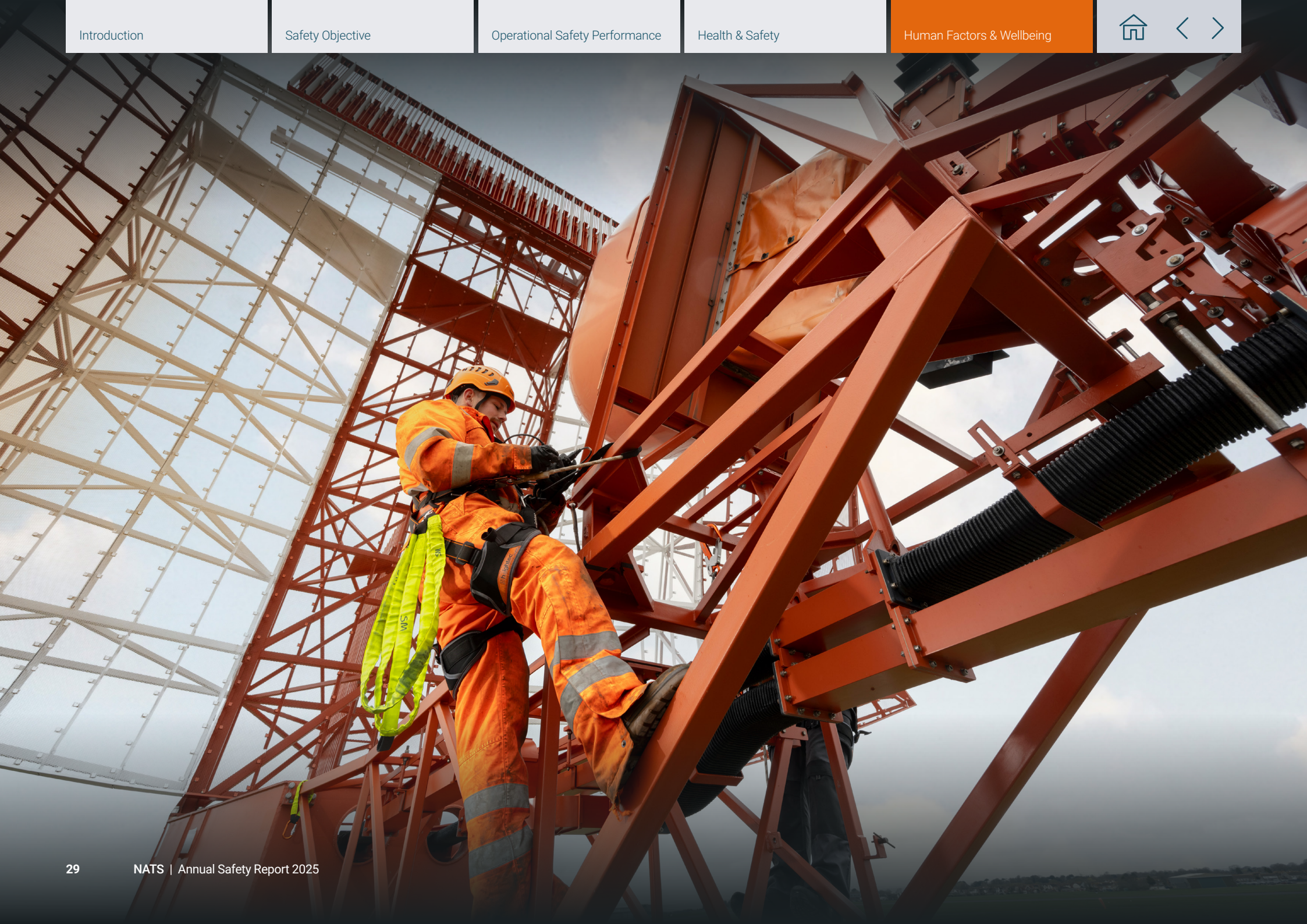
We continue to mature our H&S management system processes, which are now managed through a dedicated resource, the BMS. Process development training has been delivered to the Group H&S team members responsible for the management and effectiveness of our BMS. This training, combined with management system development previously undertaken, equips our process experts with the tools they need to develop, manage and assure our H&S management system.

A specific objective relating to improving incident reporting was set and achieved during 2025. We did this through the implementation of a sustained awareness campaign, supported by relevant communications material, which resulted in an overall reporting increase of 41% on 2024 reported figures.

As in previous years, our ISO 45001 accredited certification body, DNV, undertook a range of systems and site-based audits. The outputs from these independent audits give assurance that we have an effective management system and that it is used to minimise health & safety risks to our employees, contractors, partner organisations and people visiting our sites.

Our ongoing commitment to the effective and proportionate management of H&S across our business continues to result in low injury rates and improving reporting figures. We will continue to refine and improve our management system processes, deliver necessary H&S training and ensure that persons with H&S responsibilities are given the resources they need to keep themselves, their teams and those affected by our work activities safe.







Human Factors

Human Factors and Wellbeing provided support across all parts of the NATS operation in 2025, assisting technology changes, driving process improvements and piloting novel ways of measuring human performance in an operational environment.

We provided expertise to 18 airports-related and 24 centres-related technology projects and airspace changes, including three significant deployments across the operation: Pairwise at Heathrow Airport, Advanced Mixed Mode at Gatwick Airport, and the new Voice Communications System at Stansted Airport. Across these 42 projects, the team contributed design and development input to 15 changes and assessed and mitigated human error-related risks in 12 projects, directly supporting optimal and safe human performance. In parallel with delivery activity, the team continued to improve internal processes, most notably through the integration of the Human Error Safety Assessment Process (HESAP) into the SMS. This represents a significant step towards standardising the assessment of human error across the business.

We conducted a pilot study into the use of smart watches and desk-mounted eye trackers with controllers. This was to demonstrate that aspects of human performance, such as stress and alertness, can be measured in real time and with minimal input from operational personnel, reducing our dependency on subjective measures. Case studies have continued to help identify measures of task performance from system data - from speed of data entry to quantifying good presentation of air traffic. These task performance measures will provide a richer understanding of how human performance influences operational safety.

A deep dive into the most common causes of human error that contribute to LOS and RAT points identified five common types of misjudgements and generated a series of recommendations for Operations to consider, alongside other current and future safety improvements, that include controller tools, training and techniques.

We also introduced additional ways to improve our understanding of fatigue across our operation, using a bio-mathematical modelling tool to assess our rosters and determine when fatigue may become a factor in employee performance. Combined with the outcomes of the pilot study and data collection through Human Performance surveys, we continue to work to ensure that fatigue does not impact on safety performance, as well as making sure that appropriate mitigations are available for individuals who require them. A study into rest facilities across NATS operational sites was also undertaken and provided recommendations on best practice for units.

Perhaps most significantly, we ran our Safety Culture Survey. These surveys are incredibly important to allow us to understand how robust our safety culture is and where we need to focus improvements. Just under 3,900 people completed the survey, highlighting a consistently strong and safer culture across all areas with 78% favourable responses. A key theme that stood out was “responsibility” which achieved a 96% favourable score, demonstrating that employees understand why safety matters and the role everyone has to play in contributing to a safe operation.

Work is currently underway to develop a Human Performance Management System in conjunction with the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), and we have led on the development of guidance and a framework to ensure that Human Performance is considered in everything we do at NATS.

Employee Wellbeing

Our wellbeing offering continues to focus on our peer support and employee assistance programmes. These have both been identified as industry leading and were seen by many across NATS as a key part of the wellbeing offering in their support of employees. Our review of industry best practice and international recognised standards has highlighted a number of priority areas, and these will drive future wellbeing improvement activities across the company; the intent being to cohere the range of wellbeing offerings, both reactive and proactive, ensuring the right education, information and support is available at the right time, to the right people.



Peer Support & Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The Peer Support programme is delivered through trained peer supporters across the business. It includes topics such as mental health first aid and is available for all NATS employees. The hard work of our volunteers is showcased in the number of interventions they deliver, last year recording the highest number of interventions yet delivered - 446. This is a 26% increase on 2024 figures and feedback for the service remains overwhelmingly positive.

In parallel to Peer Support, NATS offers an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) using the UK's largest provider, Health Assured. During 2025, there was a 51% increase in the number of calls to the EAP of which 75% were counselling calls (in line with benchmark statistics) and 25% legal advice calls (12% above the benchmark).

The EAP is available to colleagues and their immediate families. During 2025, 5% of our employees' family members used the EAP service, which continues to be above the average use Health Assured has seen compared with other companies in their portfolio.

The topics discussed with Peer Support and the EAP show that the two programmes complement each other; employees use Peer Support more for work-related issues without requiring further support from the EAP, and use the EAP for personal issues such as anxiety and family relationships. The data also shows employees are continuing to work whilst they are making use of the service, indicating that the programme is having a positive impact on overall sickness rates.



Close

2025 demonstrated the strength and resilience of NATS' safety performance, amid rising traffic levels, operational complexity, and a shifting aviation landscape. Through a mature safety management approach, robust technical and operational processes, and a strong culture of reporting and learning, we met all five safety performance targets.

The publication of the NATS Safety Plan 2035 provides a clear strategic direction for the decade ahead. By establishing the seven adverse outcomes and setting out a framework for managing risk, the plan marks the most significant evolution of the NATS SMS since its inception. Our work across Human Factors, Wellbeing, Occupational Health & Safety and technical resilience reflects a proactive approach to anticipating and managing risk, and reinforces safety as our core value.

As we move further into 2026, our priorities are to implement the Safety Plan, mature our processes, and strengthen collaboration across NATS and with our international partners. With strong performance behind us and a clear path ahead, we are well positioned to deliver further improvements and progress towards our ambition of zero major safety incidents with NATS material contribution by 2035.

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The publication of the NATS Safety Plan 2035 provides a clear strategic direction for the decade ahead.

Dave Curtis

Director, Safety & Sustainability



Contact

Your views matter to us, please let us know if you have any feedback.

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