

NAD Group fully established as Deputy NAD Andy Start retires

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The National Armaments Director (NAD) Group is now fully established and sees the retirement of its Deputy Director Andy Start after 37 years in defence.

The NAD Group unites the MOD organisations responsible for developing, delivering, sustaining, housing and harbouring the UK's national arsenal and defence estate. It brings together expertise in science, technology, procurement, infrastructure and support, to provide integrated capabilities faster, more efficiently and effectively for our armed forces and allies. Its mission is to maximise UK Armed Forces collective ability to operate, deter, fight and win.

The NAD Group was created as part of the biggest defence reforms for more than 50 years, which will:

- speed up decision-making
- tackle waste
- improve outcomes for our Armed Forces

It has changed how defence partners work with industry to:

- grow the UK economy
- create jobs across the country
- deliver UK exports to drive economic growth and bolster national security

As interim NAD, Andy Start established the NAD Group in March 2025. He drew on his previous experience as CEO of Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S), ensuring the smooth stand-up of this new organisation and supporting Rupert Pearce who joined the department in October 2025. Andy's leadership has been instrumental in driving the creation and establishment of the NAD Group, ensuring it delivers for defence.

Andy's retirement marks the conclusion of the Deputy NAD role which will now dissolve. It was created to support the transition to the new operating model.

Throughout his career, Andy has made an extraordinary contribution to defence, with a consistent focus on strengthening national capability and driving organisational performance.

Defence Secretary John Healey MP said:

Andy has dedicated 37 years to UK defence—within the department and in industry. I want to offer my personal thanks for his tireless efforts over the last 2 years in helping to imagine, design and establish a new, powerful National Armaments area. Under his leadership, our enabling teams have come together in a way not seen for a generation.

The NAD Group's work is aligned with the Strategic Defence Review and will help drive the delivery of the Defence Industrial Strategy.

The benefits of the group are already being seen in Ukraine and with the conflict in the Middle East. The NAD Group has led on the creation of the new Taskforce Sabre to help UK industry step up and support Gulf partners as Iran indiscriminately attacks nations across the region.

NAD Rupert Pearce said:

Thanks to Andy, I inherited a group that was already on the pathway to a single mission for defence. Andy's leadership in setting the NAD Group up for success cannot be overstated. And on top of this, through his leadership of DE&S, he has managed some of the most complex projects across governments. I am incredibly grateful for his efforts. Thank you!

Andy's background

Before joining the MOD, Andy worked in industry which included:

- Capita Public Services
- Airbus' military space business
- BAE Systems Defence Avionics
- Harris Tactical Radio
- IFS Defence
- Inmarsat Global Government

He began his career as an engineer and programme manager working on military satellite systems.

Andy has contributed extensively to defence and industry with secondments into the MOD and Department of Trade and Industry. This included leading the UK Aerospace Innovation and Growth Team.

He has supported the defence sector through his work with the UK Electronics Council, TechUK, Women in Defence and as Chairman of Mid-Kent College and the Medway Innovation Centre.

Since 2024 he has also served as Honorary Colonel of the 106th (Yeomanry) Regiment Royal Artillery.

Andy leaves the MOD to pursue a PhD in Defence Studies at King's College London.

What the NAD Group is responsible for

The NAD Group is responsible for:

- delivering the capabilities required from industry to execute the defence plans and operations demanded by the new era
- delivering the Defence Industrial Strategy
- ensuring a resilient supply chain and the required readiness of the national 'arsenal'

- leading on UK defence exports and acquisition reform
- speeding up procurement and reducing duplication while working closely with wider government, industry, academia, and international partners to deploy best practice and investment

The NAD Group oversees a single new investment budget, consolidating 8 separate procurement budgets across defence. This streamlined approach aims to cut procurement waste and duplication whilst boosting NATO interoperability and ensuring a resilient supply chain as defence spending rises.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nad-group-fully-established-as-deputy-nad-andy-start-retires>