

Industry Profile

- The UK Aerospace industry is the second largest in the world and is the most open in the world. The sector is also a significant driver of national and regional economic growth and productivity.
- The UK based industry employs a highly skilled workforce of 130,000 people. It is estimated that a further 140,000 people in the supply chain are also indirectly supported by the Aerospace sector.
- The industry is dominated by a few large companies, these include, BAE Systems, Thales, Goodrich, EADS Astrium, Airbus and GE Aerospace, and has a thriving innovative supply chain.
- In 2010 the Ministry of Defence placed contracts with a total value of £4.07 billion, and is the single biggest purchaser of manufactured goods in the UK.
- Unite represents over 120,000 members in the Aerospace and Shipbuilding & Repair industries.

Current Issues and Activities

- The most significant issue affecting the sector at present are the cuts to public spending and the outcomes of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR). Unite has submitted evidence to government about the economic and industrial implication if wholesale cuts to the defence budget are implemented.
- The industry suffers from a skills shortage and with the focus on long term strategic planning for the sector there must be a strategic skills and training programme to ensure workers in the sector have the skills they need to do the jobs.
- The Government's Defence Industrial Strategy was published in December 2005. It's intention was to develop a clearer joint understanding across Government, industry and the unions regarding the technologies and capabilities that are essential to retain jobs in the UK, and to ensure that the skills and expertise necessary for these strategic capabilities are protected. The strategy proved invaluable to the sector and Unite is campaigning hard to encourage government produce another industrial strategy for the sector.
- The Unite National Industrial Committee has produced a Charter for Aerospace workers. The Charter lays out Unite demands for workers in the sector and will give a focus to our campaigning and political lobbying strategy.
- The European Union has taken steps to open up the European Defence market. They have produced a Code of Conduct which seeks to introduce the principles of the European Community. It is hoped that this will break down some of the protectionist strategies currently employed by some Member States, allowing the industry to be less dependent on the US market.