

Britain to intensify defence against space 'threats'

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Britain will boost the number of defence personnel working in the space sector by a fifth over five years to counter "intensifying threats", Defence Minister Gavin Williamson said on Monday.

Williamson also confirmed that Britain was looking at "alternative systems" for [satellite navigation](#) following doubts about its role in the European Union's long-awaited Galileo project after Brexit.

Launching the country's first defence space strategy, Williamson announced the Royal Air Force will take on responsibility for "command and control" of military space operations.

The increase in staffing will take the number of people working in the sector to more than 600 by 2023.

"We must make sure we are primed and ready to deter and counter the intensifying threats to our everyday life that are emerging in space," Williamson said.

"That's why today I'm announcing the RAF is taking the lead in this area and why we plan to increase the number of personnel covering space."

The space strategy will include plans to protect British operations against emerging space-based threats, such as the jamming of civilian satellites used for broadcasters and [satellite](#) navigation to support military capabilities.

The government announced earlier this month it is also exploring the development of its own satellite navigation system to rival the EU's Galileo project and the dominant US GPS system.

Britain hopes to start tendering for the programme later this year, with Australia a possible partner, the Financial Times reported Monday.

"Britain is a world leader in the [space](#) industry and our defence scientists and military personnel have played a central role in the development of the EU's Galileo satellite programme alongside British companies," Williamson said.

"So it is important we also review our contribution and how we plan for alternative systems in this crucial area," he said.

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