

News story

## **‘30 by 30’ - New funding to boost cadet force by over 40,000 by 2030**

Young people will have more chances to join the Armed Forces Cadets, under a major expansion of cadet forces across the country, announced today (Wednesday 20 August).

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From: **[Ministry of Defence](/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence)**, **[Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations \(RFCA\)](/government/organisations/reserve-forces-and-cadets-associations)** and **[Alistair Carns DSO OBE MC MP](/government/people/alistair-carns)**

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- New ‘30 by 30’ drive to increase cadets by 30% by 2030 backed with £70 million as Government delivers on Strategic Defence Review.
- RAF Air cadets to become first military youth organisation in Britain approved to train young people in official drone pilot qualifications.

- Search launched for new National Cadet Champion to boost awareness of how cadets can transform futures for young people and break down barriers to opportunity.

Young people will have more chances to join the Armed Forces Cadets, under a major expansion of cadet forces across the country, announced today (Wednesday 20 August).

Under a new '30 by 30' campaign, launched today, the Government is expanding cadet opportunities for a new generation of young people – boosting cadet forces by 30% by 2030 – backed by £70 million of new investment.

Delivering on the Strategic Defence Review, this would see over 40,000 more cadets across the UK, supporting the Government's Plan for Change to break down barriers which are holding back Britain's young people.

In a sign of how cadet forces can offer valuable STEM skills for young people, the RAF Air Cadets will become the first military youth organisation in Britain certified to train drone pilots. Once the Civil Aviation Authority approves the training manual, the Air Cadets will be able to deliver industry-accredited drone qualifications at the higher levels.

Defence has also launched the hunt to appoint a new National Cadet Champion to support and endorse the Cadet Forces and highlight the huge opportunities cadets can offer to young people from all backgrounds.

**Minister for Veterans and People, Alistair Carns MP, said:**

“Every young person deserves the chance to discover their potential, regardless of their postcode or family income.

“The cadet experience doesn't just build character – it transforms futures, helping young people build confidence, develop skills and meet new people.

“The government is kickstarting a new era for the cadets through this major expansion, backed by £70 million of extra funding. ”

Under the expansion, young people will have the chance to gain more qualifications, improve their confidence, and learn about the military.

The initiative, which delivers on the Strategic Defence Review, will prioritise cadets' expansion across all four nations, ensuring every young person has the chance to discover their potential regardless of postcode or family income.

To support the '30 by 30' campaign, the Government will deliver a package of measures to boost cadet forces, including:

- New joint Army and RAF Air Cadet Centres: adding to the five already opened and 12 under construction since this Government came into office.
- Increasing adult volunteers: streamlining the process for becoming an adult Cadet volunteer and a new fast-track opportunity for veterans to become volunteers.
- A National Cadet Champion: Hunt launched today for a new appointment to support and endorse the Cadet Forces.
- Boosting STEM skills: new opportunities to develop STEM skills and try new technologies through the cadets, including Civilian Aviation Authority approval for RAF Air cadets to deliver a CAA-endorsed qualifications in drone piloting. This will offer air cadet and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers industry recognised and transferable qualifications.
- Improving regular and reservist support for Cadets: greater opportunities for our UK military personnel – both regulars and reserves – to support the Cadet Forces.

New joint Army and Air Cadet Centres will be built – adding to the five already opened and 12 under construction, since the Government came into power to support growth of school-based cadet units.

The investment will also supercharge further opportunities in developing STEM skills and cutting-edge cyber skills training and hands-on experience with the latest drone and submersible technology – the same innovations reshaping Britain’s defence and economic landscape.

Independent research proves the cadet experience works. Participants show dramatically improved school attendance, better behaviour, and significantly higher rates of progression to university or employment.

For young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, the impact is even more pronounced – providing structure, challenge and achievement that changes life trajectories permanently.

Minister Carns is making today’s announcement at The National Air & Space Camp 2025, where he will witness cadets experiencing the future first-hand through spectacular flying displays featuring Typhoon jets, Lightning aircraft, and historic Spitfires. The camp’s careers fair connects young people directly with over 60 leading companies, turning inspiration into real employment pathways.



**OGI**

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