



Office for
Nuclear Regulation

Chief Nuclear Inspector's annual report on Great Britain's nuclear industry

October 2026



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Foreword

I am pleased to present this review of the nuclear industry's performance in 2025/26. The sector continued to operate safely and securely, but performance remained variable, reinforcing the importance of reflection and learning in sustaining high standards and responding effectively to current and future challenges.

The reporting period was shaped by geopolitical uncertainty, rapid technological development, environmental pressures and renewed national ambition for nuclear. The [Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025](#) and the [Government Response to the Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025](#) were defining moments that set clear expectations for regulators and dutyholders to become more modern, agile and productive while maintaining high standards of safety, security and safeguards.

The scale of change is significant. Supporting the government's growth agenda, strengthening energy security, achieving net zero, maintaining the nuclear deterrent and cleaning up legacy facilities will require reform of processes, culture and ways of working across the sector. The objective is clear: improve pace, efficiency and coordination without compromising standards.

We have worked closely with the Nuclear Regulatory Review Taskforce and have begun implementing its recommendations

through a significant programme of activity. Early priorities include establishing a lead regulator model as the first step towards a UK Commission for Nuclear Regulation, and creating an industry CEO Forum to improve safety and security outcomes while removing blockers, complexity, and bureaucracy that add cost and delay without proportionate safety benefits. This work will continue at pace into the next reporting year.

In taking this work forward, I am clear that closer coordination must not compromise regulatory independence. Our regulatory decisions will continue to be demonstrably evidence-based, risk-informed and underpinned by our independent judgement. Reform should therefore strengthen clarity, pace and proportionality while ensuring the legal duties, statutory purposes and regulatory challenge that underpin public confidence in nuclear regulation remain paramount.

Great Britain's (GB) internationally-recognised standards across nuclear safety, security, safeguards, transport, and nuclear site health and safety (NSHS) were upheld during 2025/26. Industry demonstrated clear capacity to improve, with important progress in hazard reduction, decommissioning and reactor transition activity, cyber security, innovation, and major programme delivery.

This was reflected in improved regulatory confidence at Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd (DRDL), strengthened cyber security performance at Sellafield Ltd and EDF, successful transition activity at Hunterston B, and stronger industry engagement on innovation and cross-cutting sector capability.

However, progress is not yet consistent. Stronger outcomes are being achieved where leadership, capability, and regulatory expectations are well aligned; elsewhere, maturity, resilience, and delivery discipline still need to improve. This is particularly evident in overall cyber security maturity, NSHS performance, organisational capability, leadership and governance, and delivery in more complex or higher-risk environments. Considering global geopolitical uncertainty, I believe greater attention is needed to ensure physical security at nuclear sites is treated with comparable priority to nuclear safety.

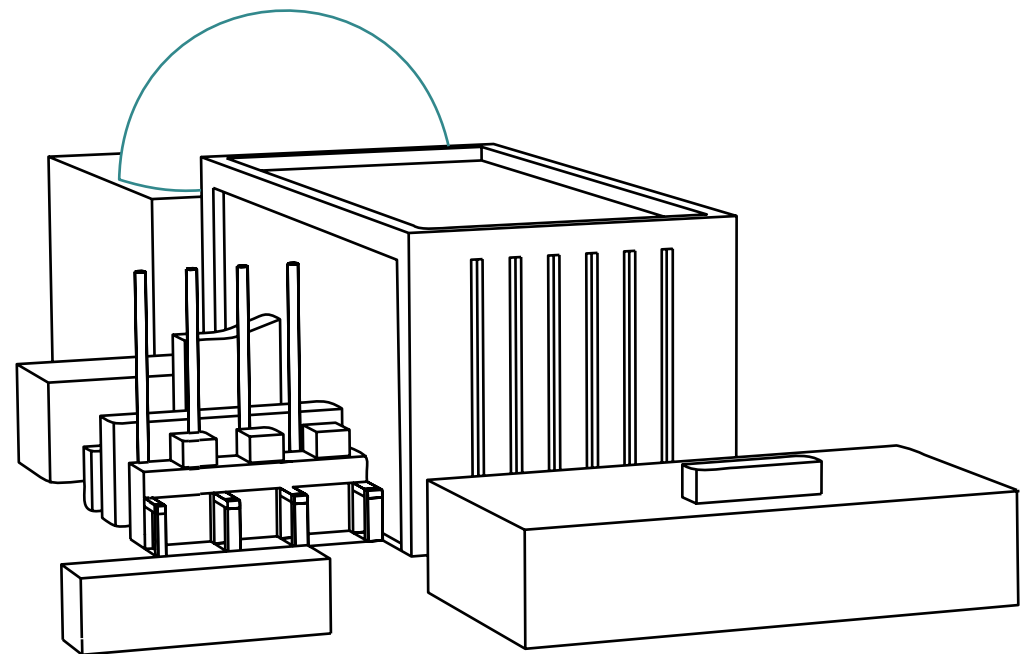
I take confidence from GB's outcome-based, goal-setting nuclear regulatory framework, which focuses on what must be achieved rather than prescribing how. This continues to give dutyholders the flexibility to adapt, innovate and improve delivery while maintaining high standards. It also places clear responsibility on industry to demonstrate ownership, evidence quality, effective governance and the behaviours needed to support sustained improvement.

As the nuclear renaissance gathers pace, the progress already being made across parts of the sector must be converted into

consistent, demonstrable improvements in performance across existing and future nuclear activities. That is how the sector will maintain public confidence, support proportionate regulation and enable safe industrial growth.

Mike Finnerty

Chief Executive / Chief Nuclear Inspector



1

Chief Nuclear Inspector's review



Across 2025/26, my assessment is that the GB nuclear industry continued to operate safely and securely. Performance remained satisfactory overall across our statutory purposes¹, although material variability between dutyholders and areas of regulatory focus continues to require targeted attention.

More obvious progress was seen where shared expectations were clear, leadership was effective and capability was aligned to delivery. However, confidence remained more limited where improvements in leadership, governance, organisational resilience and specialist capability have not yet been sufficiently embedded.

Therefore, my overall judgement is one of safe and secure operation, targeted progress and continuing variability in the depth and consistency of improvement.

1.1 Chief Nuclear Inspector themes for 2025/26: cyber security and nuclear site health and safety

I identified cyber security and NSHS as the Chief Nuclear Inspector (CNI) themes for 2025/26, and they remained central to our regulatory focus during the reporting year.

The cyber security thematic inspection programme showed improving baseline capability but also confirmed that overall maturity remains below the level expected, particularly in strategy, governance, risk management, reporting, resourcing, culture and leadership.

In NSHS, accident and incident rates remain above the long-term average for the nuclear industry, indicating that sustained improvement has been limited. Construction-related risk and fire safety continue to require regulatory attention.

Taken together, these areas show incremental progress, but greater depth and consistency are still required. Therefore, I will continue to expect dutyholders to demonstrate stronger ownership and sustained improvement in these areas.

¹ To ensure safe nuclear operations, we deliver five statutory purposes: nuclear safeguards, nuclear safety, nuclear security, nuclear site health and safety, and transport of nuclear and radioactive materials.

1.2 Overview of industry performance

This overview draws together evidence from across our regulatory activities, including inspections, changes in regulatory attention levels, enforcement activity and dutyholder-specific evidence (see Appendix A) and sector-wide performance trends (see Appendix B). It highlights where industry has made progress, where regulatory confidence remains limited, and where sustained regulatory focus is still required.

Evidence of progress can be grouped into four strategic messages:

- **Regulatory confidence improves where effective leadership, governance and delivery are sustained.** Improved performance at DRDL supported its return to routine regulatory attention. Reductions in Sellafield Ltd's cyber security regulatory attention level reflected stronger governance, capability and delivery of agreed improvements. EDF also progressed cyber security improvements, including work to address legacy systems;
- **Long-term hazard and risk reduction continues to be delivered.** Sellafield Ltd continued to reduce hazard and risk. Accelerated decommissioning across the Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) estate, plus the successful transfer of Hunterston B to NRS demonstrated progress in managing

legacy liabilities and Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor (AGR) transition activities;

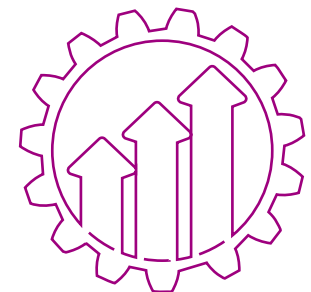
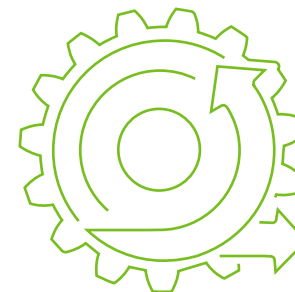
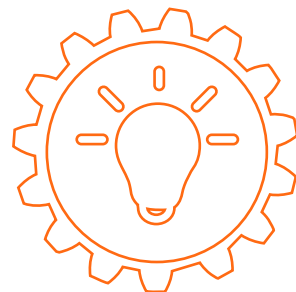
- **Industry is engaging constructively with future challenges and proportionate regulation.** Stronger engagement on innovation, future technologies and proportionate regulatory approaches showed that industry is increasingly willing to support regulatory reform and develop the capability, evidence and delivery models needed for future deployment; and
- **Industry maturity in managing emerging and cross-cutting risks is developing.** Completion of the cyber security thematic inspection programme strengthened understanding of industry-wide leadership and governance capability. Improved supply chain performance outcomes and greater awareness of counterfeit, fraudulent and suspect item risks indicate progress in managing broader sector vulnerabilities.

I recognise the progress made, but it is not yet consistent. Several areas continued to constrain confidence, including NSHS management, incident reporting quality and timeliness, cyber security maturity, organisational capability, resilience of specialist expertise, and delivery in higher-hazard or more complex environments. In these areas, improvement has remained reactive or dependent on external challenge, indicating that governance, delivery and risk management are not yet fully embedded.



Reflecting this variability, four areas require continued industry attention and regulatory focus:

- **Cyber security maturity remains below the level expected.** Strategy, governance, risk management, reporting, resourcing, culture and leadership require continued improvement, as shown through thematic inspection findings and continued enhanced regulatory attention levels at Sellafield Ltd, EDF and Springfields Fuels Ltd;
- **Industrial safety performance and incident reporting require more consistent control.** NSHS performance remains a concern. Particularly construction-related risk, fire safety and control of work, with accident and incident rates above the long-term average. Incident reporting quality, timeliness and consistency also remain variable, including late incident reporting and inconsistent reporting thresholds;



- **Delivery in higher-hazard and more complex environments remains inconsistent.** Industrial safety shortfalls at Sellafield Ltd, continued enhanced regulatory attention for safety at Dounreay, EDF Hartlepool site's move into significantly enhanced regulatory attention, and the need for periodic safety review improvements at Sizewell B all point to the need for stronger and more sustained delivery; and
- **Leadership, organisational capability and specialist resilience remain important enablers of sustained improvement.** Evidence from Sellafield Ltd, BAE Systems Marine Ltd (BAESML) and wider specialist capability areas, including safeguards, shows that effective leadership, governance, safety case implementation, and specialist expertise are not yet embedded consistently across the sector.

Changes in regulatory attention levels reinforce the mixed nature of performance across the sector. Reductions in some areas demonstrate that sustained improvement is achievable where shared expectations are clear, leadership is effective and delivery capability is consistent and resilient. Enhanced regulatory attention remains necessary where underlying capability, governance, and delivery challenges persist. I will continue to apply a targeted and risk-informed approach, enabling progress while maintaining oversight where standards are not consistently met.

1.3 Strategic context and outlook

The Taskforce report and government response set a clear direction towards a more coherent, proportionate and internationally aligned regulatory framework, supporting delivery of the UK's nuclear programme while maintaining high standards of safety and security. This aligns with the [ONR Strategy](#) and our vision to be a modern, agile, and productive regulator, enabling innovation and growth while ensuring safe nuclear for a secure and sustainable future.

This alignment does not change our independent regulatory role. We will continue to engage constructively with government, industry and other regulators, but regulatory judgements will remain independent, evidence-based and aligned with our statutory purposes. The test of reform will be whether it improves coherence, proportionality and predictability without weakening standards, accountability or the control of risks across our statutory purposes.

Industry is beginning to respond to this change in direction, with continued progress in new build, advanced technologies, innovation, decommissioning and future deployment pathways. These developments are important to energy security, national resilience and the UK's wider nuclear ambitions. However, sustained cultural change across the sector is necessary to realise opportunities and deliver the desired outcomes.

New build and advanced reactor activity is progressing alongside wider sector changes in decommissioning, fuel, waste, transport, and operating facilities. These developments are benefiting from flexible and proportionate regulatory approaches and ways of working. Future progress will depend on consistently embedding the ownership, accountability and learning behaviours that underpin performance, supported by the capability, capacity and resilience needed for credible planning and delivery.

Taken together, regulatory reform, new build, advanced technologies, hazard reduction, and future deployment pathways create significant opportunity for the sector. Realising that opportunity will depend on fit-for-purpose processes and ways of working, clear ownership, resilient capability, disciplined delivery and, crucially, the behaviours needed to embed, reinforce, and sustain cultural change in practice.

We will continue to support proportionate, enabling regulation through modern regulatory approaches, innovation, intelligence-led decision-making and international collaboration. Our focus is to ensure that reform improves pace, predictability and coordination while maintaining clear expectations across our statutory purposes.

The shared aim across the sector should be to apply effective approaches, capabilities and behaviours more consistently, with dutyholders, regulators, government and the wider supply chain working together to support safe, secure and sustainable growth. Section 4 considers this in greater detail.



2

Chief Nuclear Inspector's themes



These themes were introduced in previous CNI annual reports and have continued to shape our regulatory focus. Engagement with industry has reinforced their importance and the need for sustained effort to secure meaningful and lasting improvements. Cyber security remains a priority, with areas for improvement identified. A continued focus on NSHS, including fire safety, reflects the four strategic pillars set out in the NSHS Strategy discussed in Section 2.2.

2.1 Cyber security leadership and governance

In 2025, our inspectors completed a series of thematic, in-depth inspections across the civil nuclear industry to assess dutyholders' arrangements and capability to lead and govern cyber security risk. Overall, cyber security leadership and governance across industry remains below the level expected. Therefore, we are working with dutyholders to identify priority areas for improvement within proportionate timeframes.

Completion of these inspections marks a significant milestone in delivering the commitment set out in our 2022 Civil Nuclear Cyber Security Strategy. It also demonstrates our continued regulatory focus and leadership on cyber security as a systemic, industry-wide risk, heightened by the current geopolitical environment.

This thematic approach demonstrates our ability to apply innovative regulatory methods and has provided a deeper understanding of cyber security leadership and governance capability at dutyholder and industry level.

This work has resulted in individual, outcome-focused inspection reports being shared directly with dutyholders, alongside overarching summary briefings on industry capability provided to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

Although many dutyholders have shown commitment, established foundations and begun the journey towards improved cyber security leadership and governance, further work is required to embed arrangements consistently.



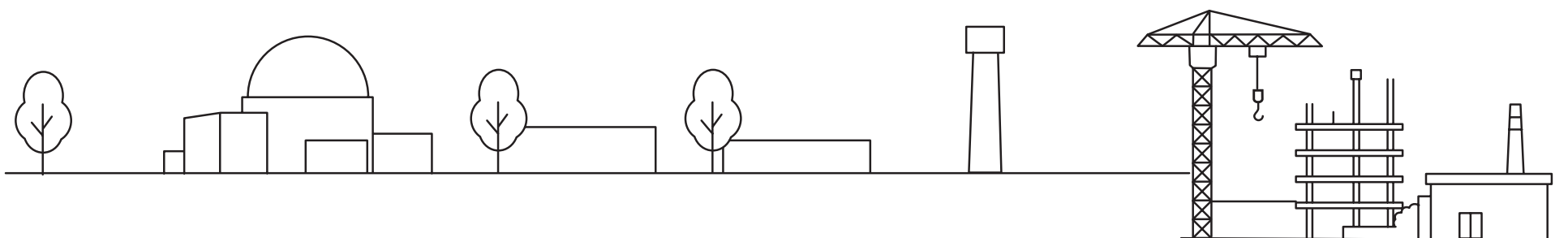
The priority areas for improvement are:

- **Strategy:** Develop clear, detailed cyber security strategies that support effective oversight, governance and delivery within proportionate timeframes;
- **Risk management:** Embed consistent cyber risk management across operations, with defined tolerances and clear leadership oversight;
- **Reporting, oversight and governance:** Provide timely, targeted reporting that supports effective governance, decision-making, leadership challenge and assurance arrangements;
- **Suitably Qualified and Experienced Personnel (SQEP) and resourcing:** Define roles and responsibilities clearly and identify skills gaps through coherent organisational arrangements;
- **Culture:** Embed learning, reinforce standards and build confidence that cyber-aware behaviours support strategic outcomes; and
- **Leadership:** Build capability at pace and maintain effective responses to emerging threats, including those associated with artificial intelligence.

We remain committed to supporting industry in strengthening cyber security leadership and governance through enhanced regulatory guidance, targeted and proportionate inspection activity, and education and knowledge-sharing initiatives. This includes increased emphasis on these areas within the revised Security Assessment Principles (SyAPs) framework.

Our cyber security specialists continue to work closely with government and other authorities, including the National Cyber Security Centre, to support improved capability across the civil nuclear sector and help ensure it is well placed to respond to and recover from cyber events.

We recognise that any future expansion of our regulatory remit to include areas such as cyber resilience will require our teams to strengthen, adapt and refocus how cyber security is regulated. We remain engaged with government and industry as this position develops and are well placed to ensure that we have the skilled and experienced personnel, and the flexible regulatory approach, needed to deliver proportionate and effective outcomes.



2.2 Nuclear site health and safety

Themed inspections continued during 2025/26 and focused on NSHS and fire safety across selected sites. This work builds on the NSHS Regulatory Strategy introduced in 2023/24, following deteriorating performance on sites.

Reported accidents and incidents improved compared with 2023/24 but remained above the long-term average, indicating that improvement is not yet sufficiently sustained. Therefore, we have continued to implement the strategy through four strategic pillars.

1. **NSHS capability:** In response to continued and varied NSHS incidents across the sector, additional training in NSHS topics, including fire safety and Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015), is strengthening our capability and supporting a more integrated and collaborative approach;
2. **Risk-informed and integrated regulation of NSHS:** Given the changing risk profile and prominence of construction-related NSHS risks across the industry, we have developed a Construction Workstream that will use risk-informed,

intelligence-led interventions to drive industry compliance with CDM 2015;

3. **Agile processes, guidance and enforcement:** We are working with dutyholders to adapt regulatory approaches to reflect changing site risk profiles. Particularly on decommissioning sites where nuclear risk is low but NSHS risks from activities such as demolition and ageing asset management remain prevalent; and
4. **Proactive industry engagement:** We continue to work with industry and stakeholders to strengthen ownership of NSHS risks, including supporting industry-led guidance on NSHS management topics and early engagement on key construction projects.

Overall, the four-pillar framework provides an effective foundation to strengthen NSHS performance. We are seeing the benefits of this approach and will continue to collaborate, target risk, remain agile and support sustained improvement in the control of NSHS risks.

3

Regulatory attention levels



Regulatory attention levels indicate the degree of oversight we apply to dutyholders across our statutory purposes. They are informed by inspectors' judgement and wider regulatory intelligence, and enable us to target our effort proportionately according to risk, performance, and the need to secure sustained improvement.

This section reports changes in attention levels during 2025/26 and highlights dutyholders subject to above-routine regulatory attention. It is therefore presented by exception, rather than providing a complete account of all routine regulatory attention. A complete list of 2026/27 attention levels is included in Annex 1.

Further relating to regulatory attention levels can be found in our [Guidance on the assignment of dutyholder attention levels](#).

3.1 Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd

During the reporting year, we applied a planned and controlled reduction in regulatory oversight at DRDL. This gave the dutyholder space to demonstrate their autonomy when delivering continuing improvements in those areas that had initially led to a period of enhanced regulatory attention.

On the basis that these improvements had been embedded and remained effective after a period of reduced oversight, we returned the site to routine regulatory attention in April 2026 (see Annex 2 case study).

With DRDL returned to routine regulatory attention, we will maintain efficient and proportionate regulation of the site's key risks, while providing regulatory advice to support efficient and cost-effective delivery of any new capability.

3.2 Sellafield Ltd – cyber security

In November 2025, Sellafield Ltd's regulatory attention level for cyber security was reduced from significantly enhanced to enhanced regulatory attention. This decision reflected the substantial progress made by the dutyholder in addressing the shortfalls identified through our regulatory interventions and the implementation of a detailed cyber security improvement programme.

Since being placed into significantly enhanced regulatory attention, our specialist inspectors have maintained regular engagement with Sellafield Ltd to support and scrutinise the development of its cyber security strategy and delivery programme. Through our enabling regulatory approach, we set out the outcomes and improvements that needed to be achieved, while allowing the dutyholder to develop and own the solutions required to address the underlying root causes. These areas included governance, organisational capability, programme delivery, risk management, and the effective implementation of security improvements across both information technology and operational technology environments.

During the reporting period, we reviewed the progress made against the regulatory plan and the criteria established for de-escalation. This assessment concluded that Sellafield Ltd had made sufficient progress to provide confidence that cyber security risks are being more appropriately identified, prioritised, and managed. The dutyholder has also demonstrated improved governance, clearer accountability, and greater maturity in the management of cyber security across the organisation.

While significant progress has been achieved, further work remains before consideration can be given to a return to routine regulatory attention. Sellafield Ltd must continue to demonstrate that improvements are sustainable over time and that delivery programmes continue to address remaining gaps, emerging threats, and long-term resilience requirements.

We will continue to engage closely with Sellafield Ltd on both cyber and physical security matters during the next reporting period, holding the dutyholder to account for the delivery of further improvements while supporting the continued enhancement of security arrangements across the site.

3.3 Sellafield Ltd – safety

Safety at Sellafield Ltd remains one of our highest regulatory priorities.

The regulatory attention level for safety at Sellafield, Legacy Ponds and Silos, Analytical Services, and Special Nuclear Materials remains unchanged at significantly enhanced regulatory attention.

This regulatory attention level reflects a combination of factors, including:

- the significant level of hazard posed by the facilities;
- the complexity, risk and timescales of retrieving the material from the high risk facilities and placing it in safer containment; and
- the ability of the ageing facilities to continue to deliver their required functions while appropriately mitigating the risks to the workers and the public.

While progress has been recognised (and explained further in Appendix A.1.2), the most hazardous areas will likely remain in significantly enhanced regulatory attention for many years.

Analytical Services was placed in significantly enhanced regulatory attention in 2023/24 due to its replacement project decisions presenting risks to the timely delivery of its long-term analytical capability. During 2025/26, Sellafield Ltd delivered major electrical and roof upgrades, and remains on schedule



to complete key milestones that will support its route back to routine regulatory attention. This progress is important to maintaining analytical capability for the Sellafield site and supporting hazard and risk reduction into the 2040s.

For the remainder of Sellafield's estate, the regulatory attention level remains unchanged at enhanced regulatory attention. Appendix A.1.2 provides further detail on specific areas of regulatory focus at Sellafield Ltd and the dutyholder's progress in addressing the areas of highest concern.

3.4 EDF – cyber security

Since entering significantly enhanced regulatory attention in April 2023, EDF has made notable progress in improving its cyber security arrangements. In line with our enabling approach, we set out the areas EDF needed to address, while allowing them space to develop and own the improvement programme. These areas were governance, vulnerability management and forward work planning. The enhancements made to governance arrangements and cyber security of operational and information technology allowed the closure of a level 2 regulatory issue.

Towards the end of the reporting period, we reviewed the dutyholder's progress in addressing the shortfalls that led to significantly enhanced regulatory attention. This concluded that sufficient progress had been made in governance,

but that two technical issues remained within vulnerability management. Further engagement was needed to build confidence in the forward work plan. Therefore, we concluded that EDF had not yet met the criteria for de-escalation to enhanced regulatory attention. This should, however, be seen in the context of broad improvement and significant progress in removing legacy technology from the IT network.

There are two remaining criteria to be met to allow de-escalation to enhanced regulatory attention. The first is for EDF to establish a comprehensive and resourced cyber security delivery programme, which aligns with our expectations, and gives confidence of timely implementation. The second is for EDF to submit a vulnerability management improvement plan to address the outstanding technical shortfalls.

We have also set high-level objectives for the next stage of de-escalation towards routine regulatory attention. These include a functioning Information Security Management System (ISMS) and a comprehensive cyber assurance programme. We have begun inspection activity in these areas, with generally positive results.

Overall, we consider that the trajectory is positive, and continued improvements will mean that a reduction in regulatory attention over the next reporting period is achievable.

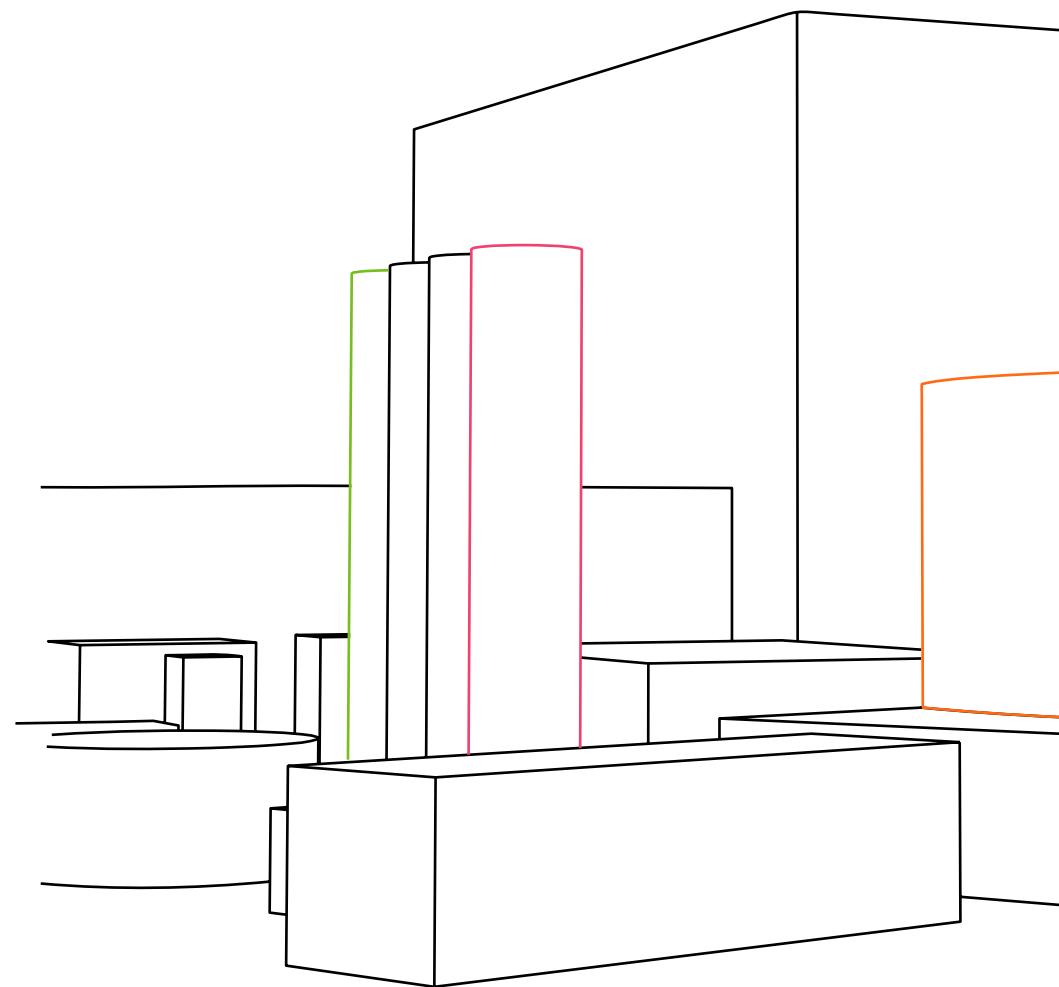
3.5 EDF – Hartlepool

Hartlepool started the reporting period in enhanced regulatory attention for safety. We agreed with the dutyholder the areas for improvement and oversaw the site's development and implementation of an improvement plan. However, during the reporting period there was a consistent increase in the number of events on site. These events primarily related to site health and safety rather than nuclear safety, but in some cases workers were harmed, and in others there was a high or medium potential for harm.

There were areas for improvement in both the management of the response to the events and the pace of delivering the agreed improvement plan. Therefore, we decided to raise the regulatory attention level for safety to significantly enhanced regulatory attention.

Notwithstanding these challenges and noting they are not directly associated with nuclear safety, we continue to judge that Hartlepool remains safe to operate. This judgement is informed by inspections, assessments and ongoing site engagement. The elevated attention level reflects the increased regulatory focus required to maintain this position, including enhanced inspector presence on site and closer oversight of governance, decision-making and leadership behaviours.

We are working closely with the station and the wider EDF organisation to agree, monitor and oversee delivery of the necessary improvements. This provides further confidence that the



station remains safe to operate. EDF has since established a performance improvement plan (PIP). We have planned targeted interventions for the year ahead by aligning our regulatory approach with the delivery and effectiveness of the PIP. We will focus on a range of key organisational areas outlined within the PIP, including NSHS and wider leadership and management, human factors, engineering, and control and instrumentation. This approach will enable the dutyholder to demonstrate improvements in the areas required.

We are beginning to see early signs of improvement, including conservative decision-making, more visible leadership, clearer local standards, stronger engagement on task understanding and risk controls, and renewed focus on SQEP assurance.

3.6 Springfields Fuels Ltd – cyber security

We are supporting Springfields Fuels Ltd (SFL) in its progression from enhanced regulatory attention to routine regulatory attention for cyber security. The regulatory attention level was raised to enhanced in response to the findings from our thematic inspection on security leadership and governance. This inspection also identified deficiencies in capability and capacity, culture, risk assessment and supply chain management. Currently, SFL remains under enhanced regulatory attention and continues to make progress through implementation of a cyber security strategy aimed at improving the key areas.

While enhanced regulatory attention remains appropriate, we judge that the dutyholder may be able to provide sufficient evidence to support a return to routine regulatory attention by the end of the next reporting year.

3.7 Nuclear Restoration Services Dounreay – safety

NRS Dounreay has been under enhanced regulatory attention for safety since July 2024. This reflects weaknesses in asset condition, including buildings and infrastructure, and the potential safety risks arising from those weaknesses. Compliance with conventional health and safety legislation also remains an area of concern, including compliance with duties under the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) and the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002. In addition, organisational change has affected workplace safety culture and remains an area of regulatory focus.

An action plan to support a return to routine regulatory attention has been agreed, and progress continues to be monitored. We are working closely with the Dounreay leadership team to provide ongoing review and guidance on delivery of the priority actions, which has led to improvements in compliance. This approach supports a no-surprises culture and will be reinforced through planned interventions in 2026/27 to confirm sustained compliance, and confidence in a return to routine regulatory attention for safety.

3.8 University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

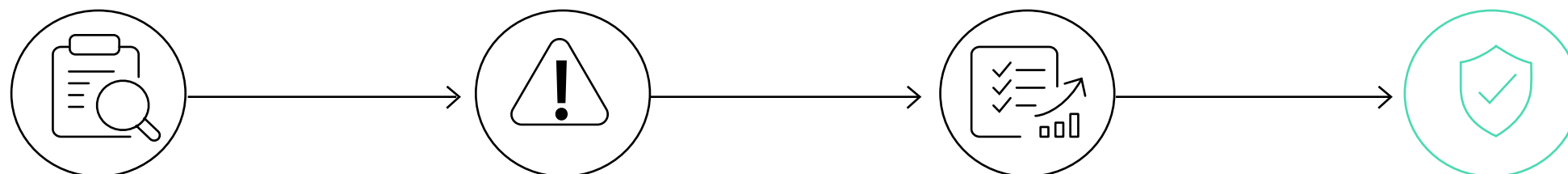
The Queen Elizabeth Hospital was placed under enhanced regulatory attention during this reporting period due to compliance shortfalls against the Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2009 (CDG 2009), relating to the transport of Class 7 dangerous goods (radioactive material).

During a transport compliance inspection in October 2025, the dutyholder raised shortfalls relating to unclear documentation and certification, including a wider certification issue affecting packaging in use across a number of radiopharmacies. This resulted in an Amber inspection rating, indicating that improvement was required. The dutyholder is proactively and collaboratively working to address the shortfalls to develop a solution to the certification issue. We are monitoring progress and, subject to satisfactory completion of the required improvements, anticipate a return to routine regulatory attention during the next reporting period..

3.9 Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Cheltenham General Hospital's regulatory attention level for the transport of Class 7 dangerous goods was reduced from enhanced to routine during the reporting period.

The dutyholder had been placed under enhanced regulatory attention following a transport compliance inspection conducted in August 2025. The inspection identified deficiencies in the hospital's transport radiation risk assessment and emergency arrangements, resulting in an Amber rating, indicating that improvement was required. Following submission and completion of an agreed action plan by December 2025, the shortfalls were addressed by the dutyholder, enabling the related regulatory issue to be closed and the regulatory attention level reduced to routine.



4

Maintaining standards while enabling safe sector growth



Enabling safe sector growth does not mean weakening regulatory standards or compromising regulatory rigour.

It means applying independent, risk-informed judgement to focus effort where it matters most and holding dutyholders to account for the evidence, capability and behaviours needed to control risk effectively.

Building on the performance evidence and strategic context set out in previous sections, safe sector growth will depend on industry, regulators, government and the wider supply chain working from shared expectations, using reliable evidence and maintaining accountable delivery. **This will require a sustained cultural shift across the sector.**

This section therefore considers how these conditions can be made more consistent across the sector, so that good practice becomes routine, repeatable and embedded. It applies the framework of approaches, capabilities and behaviours to consider how safe sector growth can be enabled through proportionate regulation, resilient capability and capacity, and performance-sustaining behaviours.

Our own strategic change activity provides a useful reference point for the wider sector shift required. We have identified several cultural shifts needed to deliver our strategic objectives, including **moving from default risk aversion to proportionate, informed risk-taking, and from consensus-driven delay to accountability and pace.** Through the newly established CEO Forum, we will work with industry leaders to share experience

of how these changes are being achieved, the impact they are having, and how similar changes could support industry in achieving its desired outcomes.

For dutyholders, the practical test is whether standards can be sustained at greater pace and scale through clear ownership, early engagement, disciplined delivery, and effective control of risk. These conditions provide the basis for regulatory confidence and more proportionate engagement.

[Enabling regulation](#), [Risk-informed regulatory decision-making](#), and our outcome-based, goal-setting regulatory regime are well-established features of our approach. Annex 2 provides case studies from this reporting period demonstrating where positive outcomes have been secured without compromising standards or regulatory independence.

4.1 Enabling proportionate regulation

Enabling proportionate regulation depends on dutyholder performance, compliance and accountability providing the basis for regulatory confidence. Clear regulatory expectations and early, open engagement, supported by **well-evidenced submissions, realistic delivery plans and visible ownership of assumptions**, allow regulatory activities to focus on areas of genuine uncertainty or risk. This improves predictability, pace and coordination without reducing standards.

High-quality evidence is fundamental to the sector's ability to support faster decisions, clearer confidence and more efficient use of specialist resource. Conversely, **weak evidence, late engagement or immature submissions create avoidable friction, increase uncertainty and can delay delivery.**

Evidence quality also shapes routine performance intelligence. Timely event and incident reporting, effective supply chain assurance and mature internal learning arrangements influence how quickly risks are understood and how confidently regulatory effort can be targeted.

This is increasingly important as dutyholders, regulators and government manage larger programmes, changing site risk profiles, new technologies, supply chain pressures and increasing construction activity. In this environment, proportionate regulation depends on the sector being able to demonstrate not only technical compliance, but also clear accountability, mature evidence and disciplined control of change.

The sector should therefore continue to strengthen the approaches and fundamentals that enable proportionate regulation.

4.2 Building sector capability through innovation, collaboration and learning

Innovation, collaboration and learning are essential sector capabilities that cut across organisational and technical boundaries. They develop skills and expertise, support shared learning and experience, strengthen governance and enable delivery to adapt while maintaining control of outcomes across our statutory purposes.

Innovation is becoming a more visible feature of the sector's response to future deployment challenges, with stronger industry engagement showing a willingness to build the capability and capacity required to adopt novel technologies and strengthen delivery capability for future deployment. Its value will depend not simply on the technologies adopted, but on whether the sector can develop the skills, expertise, governance, assurance and accountability needed to adopt them safely and responsibly (see Appendix B.7.1).

Early sector engagement helps build capability and capacity by identifying resource constraints, specialist expertise and governance arrangements before programme choices become difficult to change. Emerging maritime nuclear applications illustrate this point (see Appendix B.7.2). They provide an example of the type of early industry, government, and

regulator engagement needed where deployment models, regulatory roles, and expectations are still developing, and where sufficient skilled and experienced people will be needed to maintain effective control as new pathways emerge.

Industry maturity in managing emerging and cross-cutting risks is developing but needs to become more consistent as demand increases. **Collaboration therefore needs to mature from information sharing into disciplined sector learning.**

Common challenges in areas such as supply chain quality, construction delivery, emergency preparedness, safeguards resilience, advanced technologies and regulatory interfaces will increasingly require earlier learning, more consistent feedback loops and more coherent approaches across organisational boundaries.

The sector should therefore continue to embed key cross-cutting capabilities, and strengthen the capacity needed to adapt while maintaining standards.

4.3 Demonstrating readiness for safe sector growth

The sector's readiness for growth will depend on proportionate approaches, sufficient capability and capacity, and behaviours rooted in ownership, accountability, openness, learning and constructive challenge. These conditions will be essential if greater pace and scale are to be delivered while maintaining effective control of risks across our statutory purposes.

This is particularly important as growth places competing demands on people, supply chains, specialist expertise and regulatory capacity. Industry, regulators and government will each need to ensure that greater demand does not dilute focus on operational fundamentals or weaken control of existing risks.

The reporting period provided evidence that parts of the sector are beginning to build the foundations needed for future demand. This includes operational improvements in existing facilities, innovation engagement, proportionate use of regulatory routes, improved supply chain collaboration, and early engagement on future deployment models.

The challenge is to make this progress more consistent, so that **effective approaches, resilient capabilities and the right behaviours are embedded across the sector.** These are not separate from growth; they are how the sector can achieve greater pace, navigate complexity, realise opportunities, and deliver desired outcomes while maintaining standards through demonstrable performance and reliable delivery.

5

Overall conclusions



5.1 Industry performance

Overall industry performance during the year was safe and secure. Operational progress was demonstrated across hazard reduction, decommissioning, transition activity, cyber security, and major programme delivery. This shows that improvement is achievable where shared expectations are clear, leadership is effective and delivery is sustained. However, performance remained uneven, and improvement is not yet consistently embedded across all areas.

Continued attention is needed to strengthen cyber security maturity, NSHS performance, and the organisational capability, leadership and governance arrangements needed to deliver safely and securely in higher-hazard or more complex environments.

The evidence demonstrates both the sector's capacity to improve and the conditions under which improvement is achieved. Stronger leadership, assurance, and ownership have supported de-escalations in regulatory attention and better delivery in some areas, while weaknesses in organisational capability, governance, change control, and delivery discipline continue to limit regulatory confidence elsewhere.

As the sector enters a period of greater demand, industry must further embed the approaches, capabilities, and behaviours needed to sustain standards and convert progress into consistent, resilient, and demonstrable performance.

We will continue to regulate in an open, targeted and enabling way, supporting sustained improvement and safe sector growth while maintaining clear regulatory focus where standards are not consistently met.

5.2 Chief Nuclear Inspector's themes for 2026/27

The findings from the 2025/26 themes (cyber security and NSHS) have directly informed my choice of regulatory themes for 2026/27. The decisions below set out the forward focus for the year ahead.

Based on the progress made by industry, I have decided to retire cyber security leadership and governance as a specific CNI theme. But this does not reduce its regulatory importance. Cyber and physical security will remain subject to targeted oversight through our operational directorates, supported by our integrated delivery model, revisions to the SyAPs framework and a greater focus on operational resilience.

For 2026/27, I am maintaining a specific thematic focus on construction NSHS. This reflects the scale of construction activity planned across the sector, the continuing profile of construction-related risk, and the need to secure measurable improvements in leadership, planning, control of work, and compliance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.

5.21 CNI 2026/27 themed Inspection on Construction Nuclear Site Health and Safety

The 2026/27 construction NSHS themed inspection will test whether the improvements sought through previous CNI challenge to industry to improve performance are being translated into practical control of construction risks. The inspection will focus on how dutyholders demonstrate leadership, organisational capability, and effective discharge of CDM 2015 duties across selected construction activities.

Self-assessment responses, previous regulatory intelligence, and project risk information will be used to target inspections where they are most likely to add value. This will enable us to test how construction risks are being identified, governed, and controlled in practice, through both the design and construction phases.

The findings will be used to benchmark performance across the sector, inform future interventions and identify where further regulatory attention, including proportionate enforcement action, may be required. This approach will help ensure the theme provides clear evidence of whether industry is converting intent and senior-level commitment into sustained improvement in construction NSHS performance.

5.3 Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025 implications for ONR

The Nuclear Regulatory Review 2025 establishes a sector-wide reform agenda for regulators, government and dutyholders to improve coordination, proportionality and international alignment while maintaining high standards of nuclear safety and security and the wider regulatory remit. For us, this means playing a central role in implementing reforms that simplify regulatory structures, improve joint working and support more risk-informed decision-making across the sector. The Taskforce's findings have also reinforced the priorities in our new [ONR Strategy](#), including simplification, proportionality, and stronger regulatory coherence. Taken together, these changes present an important opportunity for us to help shape a more agile, effective and trusted regulatory framework that better supports delivery of the UK's nuclear programme.

A key part of this response is our establishment of the Lead Nuclear Regulator Group (LNRG) as a step towards developing the UK Commission of Nuclear Regulation, which will strengthen coordination across the regulatory landscape and provide industry with a clearer route for engagement on significant nuclear projects. By aligning regulatory input, increasing transparency, and applying risk-informed, outcome-focused regulation, the LNRG will help reduce unnecessary duplication and complexity while maintaining high standards of safety and environmental protection.

We have begun work through the newly-established CEO Forum, and intend to use it as a key route for engaging with industry on the wider cultural changes needed to help the sector achieve its ambitions safely and securely.

5.4 Forward look

Looking ahead, the central challenge for industry is to ensure that growth, reform and innovation are matched by consistent improvements in delivery, capability and control. As demand increases across new build, decommissioning, defence-related work, advanced technologies and the existing estate, dutyholders will need to demonstrate that performance can remain safe, secure and resilient under more demanding conditions.

We will continue to anticipate change rather than react to it, engaging early with industry and government so shared expectations are clear before programme choices become difficult to change. This will support more proportionate regulatory approaches, but it will also depend on dutyholders bringing mature evidence, realistic delivery plans and clear ownership of risks, assumptions and decisions.

The forward industry focus will span both new and existing nuclear activities. Major construction programmes at Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C, progression of the Rolls-Royce SMR GDA, preparatory engagement for future Wylfa site licensing, and

the continued operation, decommissioning, and transition of the existing estate will all require strong delivery discipline, effective supply chain control, resilient capability and clear safety case maturity. Emerging areas such as maritime nuclear applications, alternative deployment models and advanced fuels will also require early evidence, clear deployment assumptions and effective ownership of novel risks.

As the nuclear renaissance gathers pace, sustained cultural change across the sector will be needed to reinforce the behaviours that underpin safe growth and enable opportunities to be realised. This is how industry, supported by effective regulatory engagement and wider sector collaboration, can maintain public confidence while delivering the next phase of safe, secure, and sustainable nuclear development.

Annex 1

Regulatory attention levels

Level
1

**Significantly
Enhanced
Regulatory
Attention**

Level
2

**Enhanced
Regulatory
Attention**

Level
3

**Routine
Regulatory
Attention**

The regulatory attention levels that we are applying during 2026/27 are summarised below in **Table 1** to **Table 4**.

Arrows indicate change from the previous year: ▲ raised, ▼ reduced. A dash indicates that no attention level is recorded for that category.

Table 1: Regulatory attention levels for safety and security performance

Sellafield Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Cyber Security	—	L2 ▼
Legacy Ponds and Silos	L1	L3
Special Nuclear Materials	L1	L3
Analytical Services	L1	L3
Remainder	L2	L3

EDF Nuclear Generation Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Cyber Security	—	L1
Hartlepool	▲ L1	L3
Heysham 1	L3	L3
Heysham 2	L3	L3
Hinkley Point B	L3	L3

Site/area	Safety	Security
Sizewell B	L3	L3
Dungeness B	L3	L3
Torness	L3	L3

Nuclear Restoration Services

Site/area	Safety	Security
Cyber Security	—	L3
Dounreay	L2	L3
Berkeley	L3	L3
Bradwell	L3	L3
Chapelcross	L3	L3
Dungeness A	L3	L3
Harwell	L3	L3
Hinkley A	L3	L3
Hunterston A	L3	L3
Hunterston B	L3	L3
Oldbury	L3	L3
Sizewell A	L3	L3
Trawsfynydd	L3	L3

Site/area	Safety	Security
Winfrith	L3	L3
Wylfa	L3	L3

NNB Generation Company (HPC) Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Hinkley Point C	L3	L3

Sizewell C Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Sizewell C	L3	L3

Springfields Fuels Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Cyber Security	—	L2
Springfields	L3	L3

Urenco UK Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Capenhurst	L3	L3

AWE Plc

Site/area	Safety	Security
Aldermaston	L3	—
Burghfield	L3	—

BAE Systems Marine Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Barrow	L3	—

Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Devonport	L3 ↓	—

Rolls-Royce Submarines Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Derby	L3	—

GE Healthcare

Site/area	Safety	Security
Amersham	L3	L3

Cyclife UK Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Lillyhall	L3	L3

Inutec Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Winfrith	L3	L3

Rosyth Royal Dockyard Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
Rosyth	L3	—

Nuclear Waste Services Ltd

Site/area	Safety	Security
LLWR	L3	L3

Cavendish Nuclear

Site/area	Safety	Security
—	—	L3

Centronic

Site/area	Safety	Security
—	—	L3

National Nuclear Laboratory

Site/area	Safety	Security
—	—	L3

Table 2: Regulatory attention levels for civil nuclear security performance of approved carriers

Approved carrier	Regulatory attention level
CTS Logistics (GB)	L3
David Watts Transport Ltd	L3
Dounreay (NRS)	L3
EDF Nuclear Generation Ltd	L3
Express Transport SA (Spain)	L3
Nuclear Transport Solutions (NTS) [includes: Direct Rail Services (DRS); International Nuclear Services (INS); and Pacific Nuclear Transport Services (PNTL)]	L3
ORANO NCS GmbH (Germany)	L3

Approved carrier	Regulatory attention level
ORANO NPS (France)	L3
Sellafield Ltd	L3
Société De Transports Spéciaux Industriels (STSI) (France)	L3
Springfields Fuels Ltd	L3
Transrad (Belgium)	L3

Table 3: Safety regulatory attention levels for transport performance

Class 7 transport dutyholders*	Regulatory attention level
University Birmingham NHS Trust	▲ L2
Extran Medica	L3
Cheltenham General Hospital	L3 ▼

* **Note:** The transport of Class 7 dangerous goods (radioactive material) is carried out into, out of and throughout the country by a large number of domestic and international organisations. It is therefore not practical to assign a regulatory attention level to every transport dutyholder. For transport regulatory purposes, attention levels are assigned or reviewed only where specific circumstances indicate that doing so would support our regulatory response. The three dutyholders listed in Table 3 were those considered during the reporting period.

Table 4: Regulatory attention levels for nuclear safeguards for dutyholders under the Nuclear Safeguards Regulations 2019

Safeguards dutyholders and qualifying nuclear facilities	Regulatory attention level
Sellafield (Sellafield Ltd)	L3
EDF Corporate and sites	L3
NRS Corporate and sites	L3
Dounreay (NRS)	L3
Urenco Capenhurst	L3
Westinghouse, Springfields Fuels	L3
Qualifying nuclear facilities with limited operations (QNFLO) dutyholders have smaller quantities of qualifying nuclear material (QNM) and conduct limited types of activities. We regulate these proportionately to the reduced safeguards risks present. There are currently 148 QNFLO dutyholders but this number fluctuates throughout the year as the ongoing need for QNM at these sites changes.	L3



ONR Office for Nuclear Regulation

MSA

Annex 2

Case studies



Enabling design replication and delivery through proportionate regulation

Challenge

Evolving designated standards under the Pressure Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 (PE(S)R) created a material regulatory challenge for both Sizewell C (SZC) and Hinkley Point C (HPC).

For SZC, the issue risked undermining its core strategy of replicating the HPC design to deliver a safe, efficient “next-of-a-kind” project. For HPC, where design and manufacturing were already complete and installation was well underway, there was uncertainty around how conformity would be demonstrated at final assembly if regulatory expectations shifted late in the project.

The potential implications were substantial. For HPC alone, reassessment to updated standards was estimated at nearly 60,000 engineering hours (approximately £10M), with wider design changes potentially driving further cost and schedule impacts across a large and interconnected construction scope.

Approach

We took an early, proactive role to provide clarity and direction. We facilitated engagement between both licensees and the relevant conformity assessment bodies, alongside coordination with the UK Office for Product Safety and Standards.

Through this engagement, we set out a clear and proportionate pathway for compliance, supported by focused regulatory advice on how to develop a robust, evidence-based position. This approach enabled each licensee to produce concise, targeted “papers of principle”, demonstrating that the existing designs remain safe, meet statutory essential safety requirements, and reduce risks to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP).

We supported the adoption of a proportionate compliance route under Regulation 48 (“Declaration of Conformity”), rather than defaulting to wholesale re-analysis against evolving designated standards. The evidence demonstrated that the changes to the standards did not address a fundamental safety deficiency and that the effort associated with recalculation and potential redesign would be grossly disproportionate to any additional safety benefit.

Outcome

This enabling and proportionate approach provided regulatory certainty at a critical stage of delivery. SZC was able to maintain its replication strategy, while HPC retained a clear and credible route to demonstrating conformity at the appropriate stage of installation and assessment. The approach avoided extensive re-analysis and open-ended redesign across a large, interdependent scope of plant, helping to mitigate significant cost escalation and protect delivery schedules from avoidable delay.

Overall, the case study shows how proportionate, risk-informed regulation can maintain high safety standards while supporting efficient delivery of major nuclear infrastructure.

Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor (AGR) transition and the use of proportionate decision making: AGR relicensing – Hunterston B transfer

Challenge

The Secretary of State for DESNZ determined that seven AGR sites will transfer from EDF to Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) ownership following defuelling. Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) have been appointed as the Site Licence Company. Hunterston B (HNB) was the first site to transfer.

This presented a complex regulatory challenge. The Nuclear Installations Act (NIA) 1965 does not allow a nuclear site licence to be transferred between corporate bodies. This meant we had to assess NRS's application for a new nuclear site licence while revoking EDF's licence at the point of transfer. At the same time, the site's hazard profile was changing as it moved from operations into decommissioning, and EDF and NRS were operating with different systems, arrangements, and organisational cultures shaped by different stages of the nuclear lifecycle. Therefore, a key objective was to support a seamless transfer of operations while maintaining effective regulatory oversight.

Approach

We adopted a pragmatic, proportionate and enabling regulatory approach to this issue. Following verification of the fuel-free state, regulatory responsibility for HNB transferred from our Operating Facilities directorate (OFD) to our Sellafield, Decommissioning, Fuel, and Waste directorate (SDFW), reflecting the site's changed risk profile. SDFW led the assessment of NRS's licence application, supported by OFD.

Throughout the project, we worked collaboratively with dutyholders to support submission of a right-first-time application, maintain risk-based oversight up to the point of transfer, and focus assessment on areas of material change. Existing assessments and approvals were relied on where no significant change had been identified. We also worked with the dutyholders to minimise change at the point of transfer by streamlining EDF's fuel-free arrangements to align with NRS requirements, simplifying the post-defuelling safety case and removing the need for a periodic safety review.

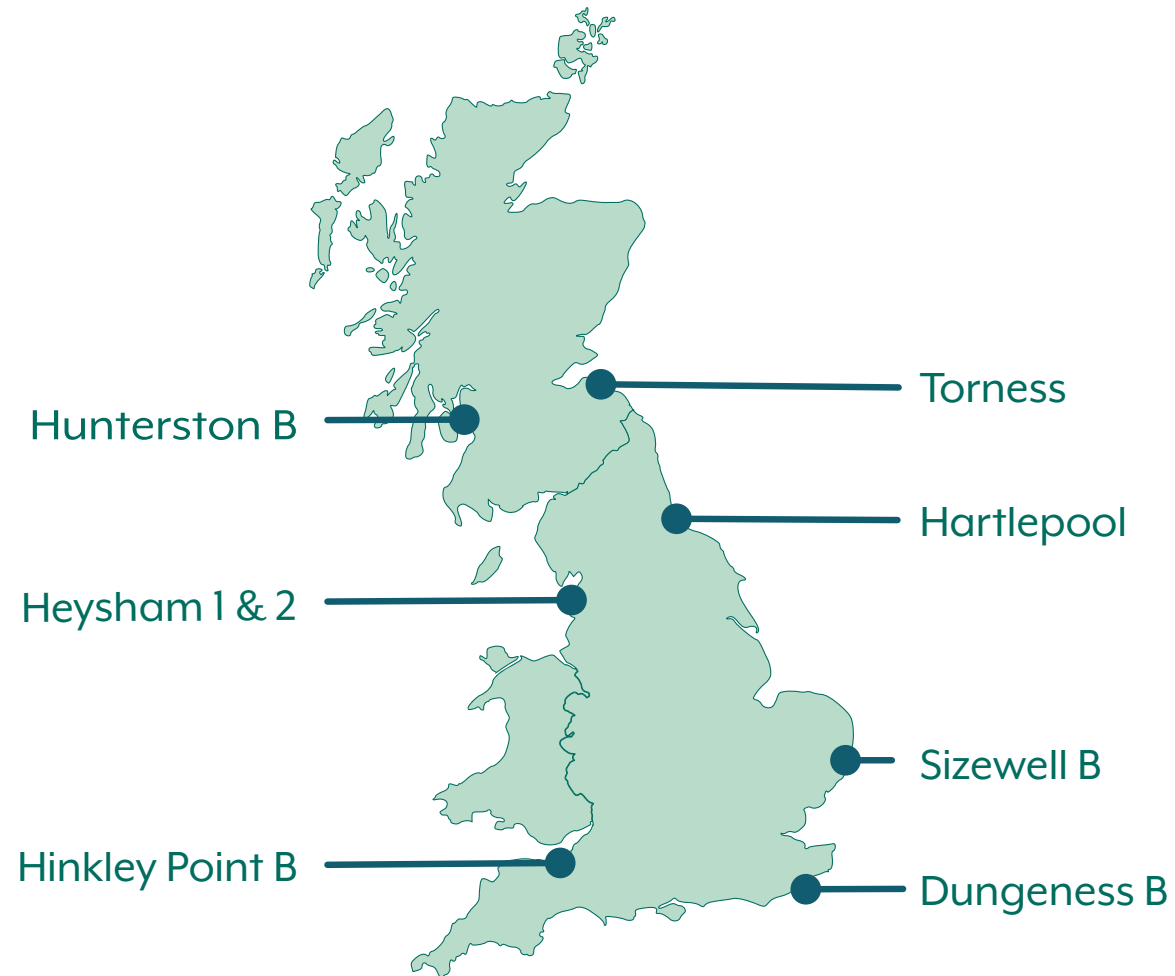
Outcome

This approach enabled us to grant NRS a nuclear site licence for HNB and support the seamless transfer of operations on time and within cost, despite this being the most complex relicensing project undertaken in a generation.

The approach also established a more efficient basis for follow-on AGR transfers. By focusing regulatory effort on differences from previously assessed sites, we can assess subsequent applications more proportionately. For example, the differences between HNB's and Hinkley Point B's post-defuelling safety cases were judged insufficient to justify assessment of Hinkley Point B's case.

More broadly, the project demonstrated our ability to regulate effectively across the full nuclear lifecycle while supporting timely and proportionate delivery.

Figure 1: AGR Sites to be Transferred from EDF to NRS



Risk-informed proportionate regulation of Nuclear Restoration Services sites

Challenge

Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) manages a diverse portfolio of decommissioning sites where the risk profile has shifted significantly over time. At many sites, conventional health and safety risks associated with demolition, construction and ageing infrastructure now dominate over traditional nuclear hazards. This created a need for us to review whether our regulatory approach remained aligned with the most significant risks and with the pace and nature of decommissioning activity.

Approach

Recognising this shift, we reviewed our regulatory approach and implemented a risk-informed, targeted engagement model across the NRS estate. The revised approach focuses regulatory attention on those areas most relevant to current risk. This includes management systems, asset integrity, radioactive waste and organisational capability, while reducing routine inspection of lower-risk licence conditions.

In parallel, we increased our emphasis on conventional health and safety, regulating most major projects through CDM 2015 where appropriate, rather than formal nuclear permissioning. A key feature of the approach is the introduction of Key Decommissioning Milestones (KDMs). KDMs provide a clear, measurable framework for demonstrating delivery of risk reduction and are used to hold NRS to account for the pace and effectiveness of decommissioning across its sites. The approach also includes more themed, risk-based inspections and greater use of NRS's internal oversight capability, supporting a more efficient, proportionate and enabling regulatory relationship.

Outcome

This approach has improved alignment of regulatory effort with the highest hazards, particularly construction and decommissioning risks, while reducing routine inspection burden and maintaining effective oversight. It has also created clearer accountability for delivery, with expectations linked more directly to measurable risk reduction.

As the approach has been implemented, it has supported NRS in focusing resources on activities that deliver tangible safety improvements, while enabling more flexible and innovative delivery where outcomes are demonstrable. We will continue to monitor the delivery of KDMs and refine the model to ensure regulation remains proportionate and targeted as decommissioning progresses and site risks evolve.

Vendor Inspection of Mirion Technology (Canberra) Ltd

Challenge

Suppliers play a vital role in providing products and services that support the design, construction, operation, and decommissioning of nuclear facilities. Licensees require robust Supply Chain Management (SCM) arrangements to ensure that high-risk products and services are delivered as intended and when required. These arrangements should include oversight and assurance activities deployed in proportion to the risk of a product or service not meeting its intended functional requirement.

Approach

The Energy Act 2013 establishes us as the Enforcing Authority for Section 6 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HSWA) 1974, which relates to the 'General Duties of Manufacturers'. One of the methods we utilise to exercise this responsibility is via an annual Vendor Inspection (VI) programme that samples the adequacy of licensee and vendor supply chain management arrangements.

The programme targets areas of risk and seeks to influence improvements across the GB nuclear industry. It includes suppliers who provide safety-related products or services and, in doing so, enables us to consider the adequacy of licensees' SCM arrangements.

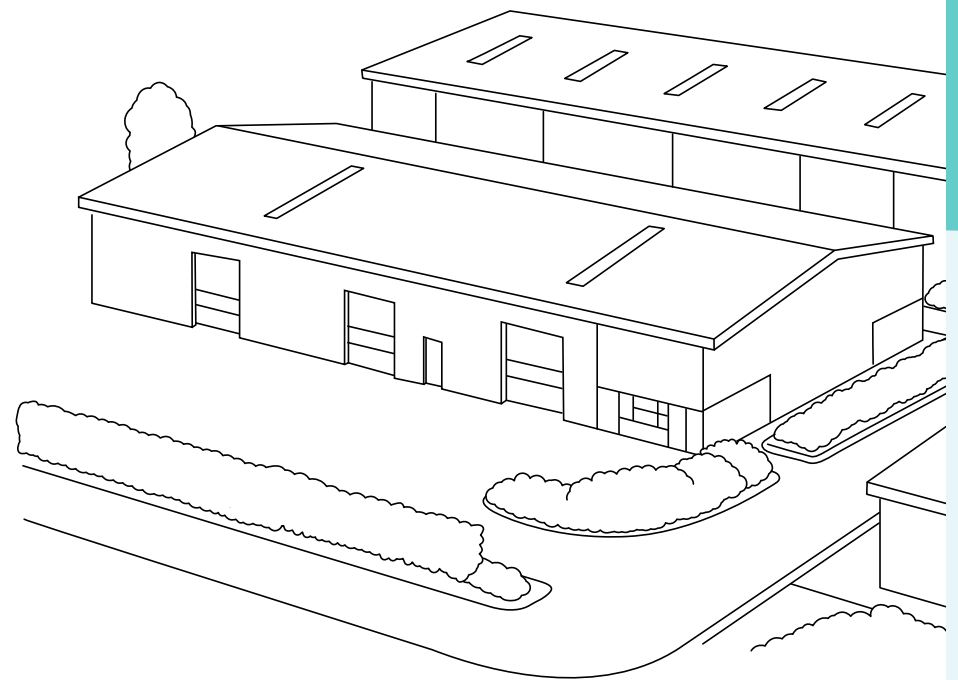
The programme identified Mirion Technology for inspection, given their role as a key supplier to multiple licensees. In November 2025, an inspection took place at Mirion Technology's Warrington premises ([Mirion-canberra-technology-site-inspection-id-53796](#)).

The inspection identified areas of good practice associated with controls to mitigate the risk of counterfeit, fraudulent, and suspect items. It also identified shortfalls in quality management arrangements relating to quality plan adherence and control, and aspects of organisational culture associated with the toleration of degraded conditions. If not promptly addressed, these shortfalls could have affected the delivery of products to the GB nuclear industry. Consequently, a Regulatory Issue was raised to secure the necessary improvements.

Outcome

Mirion Technology established and implemented an improvement plan to address the shortfalls. It responded constructively to regulatory challenge and engaged positively throughout the intervention. The improvements were completed to plan, and arrangements have been implemented to sustain the enhanced controls.

These improvements reduce the risk of quality shortfalls in high-risk products purchased by GB licensees, supporting safe and reliable nuclear operations while reinforcing proportionate regulatory oversight of the supply chain.



Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd return to routine regulatory attention

Challenge

DRDL had been in enhanced regulatory attention since 2014 due to safety issues linked to ageing facilities, organisational capability, and control of work. Following a revised regulatory approach in 2022, DRDL focused on improvements to its leadership, decision making, organisational capability, and internal assurance. By 2024, DRDL had made significant progress in these areas and was able to demonstrate ownership and understanding of its risks and how they are managed. The challenge for both us and DRDL was whether it could autonomously sustain these improvements in safety performance whilst delivering an increasing and challenging workload under programme pressures.

Approach

We applied a planned and controlled reduction in regulatory oversight to allow DRDL to demonstrate sustained safety performance. This was done while targeting a regular programme of inspections, and other interventions, on DRDL's internal assurance and challenge functions to gain confidence that they will support enduring safe delivery of its activities. Our enabling regulatory approach allowed us to work closely with DRDL to gain continued assurance that its advice and governance arrangements were adequate and embedded to support long-term safety sustainability of safety performance. Our interventions also focused on DRDL's capability and capacity to deliver the current and planned construction and submarine maintenance activities, as well as its ability to identify and respond to emerging risks.

Outcome

Our approach allowed DRDL to demonstrate that its improvements have been embedded and remained effective with reduced regulatory oversight, and that performance had been sustained over time. We were able to observe a period of consistently safe operations. Site leadership demonstrated a positive approach to safety management and culture and its organisational learning and self-assessment increasingly driving continuous improvement. On this basis, we concluded that DRDL met the criteria for a return to routine regulatory attention from April 2026.

