

Job of The Week

Air Traffic Controller

Key Skills

- concentration skills
- knowledge of transport methods, costs and benefits
- the ability to use your judgement and make decisions
- the ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure
- excellent verbal communication skills
- complex problem-solving skills
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- the ability to think clearly using logic and reasoning
- thorough understanding of computer systems and apps

Salary

£18,000 - £100,000

Working hours

35-45

Evenings/ Weekends/ Bank
Holiday on a shift pattern

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Air Traffic Controller

Additional Information

Senior air traffic controllers' salaries can rise to over £100,000 at larger airports.

Apprenticeship

You could do an Air Traffic Controller Higher Apprenticeship through the Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force:

Entry requirements

You'll usually need 4 or 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C) and A Levels, or equivalent, for a higher or degree apprenticeship

Direct Application/ Alternative Route

You can apply for a place as a trainee with National Air Traffic Services.

You'll need a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C) or equivalent qualifications, including English and Maths.

You'll be expected to relocate to Fareham in Hampshire while training. Once you qualify, you could work anywhere in the UK. Initial training takes up to 1 year and further training may continue while working.

You may also be considered for training if you have relevant aviation experience as a military air traffic controller, or military or commercial pilot.

Career path and progression

With experience, you could move into training and assessing new controllers, or become a supervisor or unit manager. You could also move into operations management.

Day to Day tasks:

Your tasks will vary depending on which of the 3 types of controller you are:

- **Area Controller** - track and guide aircraft flying at higher altitudes through a sector and are based at a Regional Control Centre
- **Approach Controller** - manage aircraft as they approach the airport and issue instructions to planes that have just taken off
- **Aerodrome Controller** - work in a control tower, giving clearance to land and take off, and guide pilots to the correct taxi positions on stands and runways
- **Typically in these roles you could:**
 - make sure safe distances are maintained between aircraft
 - keep in radio contact with flight crew and give out instructions
 - prevent collisions between planes and with other obstacles
 - handle emergencies
 - monitor data

Working conditions

You could work in an airport control tower



Labour Market Information

In the Careers section of the school website you can find the useful comparison tool the 'Labour Market Information widget'.

Use the widget to compare different job roles in any employment sector or relating specifically to the 'Job of the Week'.

Air traffic controllers	
Weekly Pay £1,730	Annual Pay £89,960
Hours/Week 47h	Hourly Pay £37
Workforce Change (projected)	
Growth 5%	Replacement 49.8%
<p>The workforce is projected to grow by 5% over the period to 2027, creating 400 jobs. In the same period, 49.8% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 4,400 job openings.</p>	
<p>You might find this job in Warehousing, etc</p>	
More info	Clear card

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Air transport operatives	
Weekly Pay £540	Annual Pay £28,080
Hours/Week 44h	Hourly Pay £12
Workforce Change (projected)	
Growth 0.5%	Replacement 69.3%
<p>The workforce is projected to grow by 0.5% over the period to 2027, creating 100 jobs. In the same period, 69.3% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 11,300 job openings.</p>	
<p>You might find this job in Warehousing, etc Air transport Computer programming, etc</p>	
More info	Clear card

Aircraft pilots and flight engineers	
Weekly Pay £1,850	Annual Pay £96,200
Hours/Week 40h	Hourly Pay £46
Workforce Change (projected)	
Growth 5%	Replacement 49.8%
<p>The workforce is projected to grow by 5% over the period to 2027, creating 1,200 jobs. In the same period, 49.8% of the workforce is projected to retire, creating 11,800 job openings.</p>	
<p>You might find this job in Air transport Warehousing, etc Public admin. & defence Education</p>	
More info	Clear card



Labour Market Information

Air traffic controllers

Air traffic controllers prepare flight plans, authorise flight departures and arrivals and maintain radio, radar and/or visual contact with aircraft to ensure the safe movement of air traffic.

Common tasks in this job:

- maintains radio and/or radar or visual contact with aircraft and liaises with other air traffic controllers and control centres to direct aircraft in and out of controlled airspace and into holding areas ready for landing;
- directs the movement of aircraft en route to its destination and ensures minimum distances are maintained between planes;
- gives landing instructions to pilot and monitors descent of aircraft;
- directs movement of aircraft and motor vehicles on runways, taxiways and in parking bays;

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Air transport operatives

Air transport operatives refuel, load and unload aircraft, direct the movement of aircraft at airports, and position gangways or staircases to allow passengers to board and disembark aircraft.

Common tasks in this job:

- refuels aircraft from mobile tankers;
- directs the ground movement of aircraft at airports;
- loads and unloads conveyor belts to transport luggage between terminal buildings and aircraft, monitors conveyor belts and clears any blockages;
- loads aircraft with luggage, in-flight meals, refreshments and other items;

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Aircraft pilots and flight engineers

Aircraft flight deck officers check, regulate, adjust and test engines and other equipment prior to take-off, navigate and pilot aircraft and give flying lessons.

Common tasks in this job:

- studies flight plan, discusses it with flight deck crew and makes any necessary adjustments;
- directs or undertakes routine checks on engines, instruments, control panels, cargo distribution and fuel supplies;
- directs or undertakes the operation of controls to fly aeroplanes and helicopters, complying with air traffic control and aircraft operating procedures;
- monitors fuel consumption, air pressure, engine performance and other indicators during flight and advises pilot of any factors that affect the navigation or performance of the aircraft;

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Keep looking...

Use these links to learn more about our Job of The Week, consider the various pathways leading to the career, what you can be doing now to help yourself and other roles in the industry...

Take a look at these short videos for inspiration...

NATS Air Traffic Controller - London



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0W1aSGs0m1A>

Behind the scenes at Stanstead Air Traffic Control



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGDn1Vt8A>

A Day in the life of an Air Traffic Controller



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9G6yMCCs7Gk>

Air Traffic Control Apprenticeship



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omk10n1zqI>

Useful Websites

[Air traffic controller | Explore careers | National Careers Service](#)

[Trainee Air Traffic Controllers - NATS](#)

[Air traffic controller job profile | Prospects.ac.uk](#)

[Air Traffic Controllers | Career profile | UCAS](#)

[RAF Recruitment | Air & Space Operations Specialist \(Flight Operations\) | Royal Air Force \(mod.uk\)](#)

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