

# Integrated Product Support Consultant and Safety Engineer

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## My Journey from Safety Specialist to Support Engineer in the UK Defence Industry

In the intricate web of the UK Defence Industry, roles are as diverse as the technologies and systems they support. My transition from a safety specialist to a support engineer marks a significant shift in my career, one that blends the meticulous focus on safety with the broad, dynamic challenges of support engineering. This journey is not just a career move but a paradigm shift that underscores the importance of adaptability, continuous learning, and the interconnectivity of different engineering domains.

### The Foundation: Safety Specialism

My career began as a safety specialist, a role defined by precision and an unwavering commitment to mitigating risks. Safety specialists in the defence sector are tasked with ensuring that systems, from advanced weaponry to complex machinery, operate without posing undue risk to personnel or the environment. This involves rigorous analysis, compliance with stringent safety standards, and a proactive approach to identifying potential hazards.

In this role, I developed a keen eye for detail and a methodical approach to problem-solving. I learned to navigate through layers of regulations and standards, understanding the critical importance of documentation, traceability, and systematic evaluation. These skills are not just technical but also deeply analytical, requiring a mindset that balances caution with the need for operational efficiency.

### The Transition: Embracing a Broader Horizon

The move to support engineering was driven by a desire to broaden my impact within the defence sector. Support engineering encompasses a wide array of responsibilities, including maintenance, logistics, system integration, and user support. It requires a holistic understanding of systems and their operational contexts, as well as the ability to respond to diverse challenges in real-time.

Transitioning into this role meant expanding my technical repertoire. While safety specialism is about pre-emptive risk management, support engineering is about dynamic problem-solving and sustaining operational readiness. This shift required me to deepen my understanding of the systems I once evaluated purely for safety, now focusing on their overall functionality, maintenance needs, and lifecycle management.

### Learning and Adaptation

One of the key elements of this transition has been the continuous learning process. The defence industry is characterised by rapid technological advancements and evolving threats, demanding that professionals stay ahead of the curve. For me, this has meant pursuing additional training in using the Integrated Product Support (IPS) Tool suite from Pennant. This suite promises efficiency as we move towards digital transformation and how we conduct IPS in the defence domain.

Moreover, the role of a support engineer is inherently collaborative. It involves working closely with other engineers, technicians, and stakeholders to ensure that systems remain operational and effective. Since Pennant is a manufacturing company, I am very sure that my position in the company will allow for collaboration where I will experience the importance of teamwork when tackling complex engineering challenges.

While the roles of safety specialist and support engineer are distinct, they are intrinsically linked. The safety measures and protocols I developed and adhered to as a safety specialist now inform my approach to support engineering. Ensuring that systems are safe is a fundamental aspect of ensuring they are reliable and maintainable.

In practice, this means that my background in safety has given me a unique perspective on risk management within support engineering. I can anticipate potential issues before they arise and implement strategies that not only solve problems, but also enhance overall system safety. This synergy has proven invaluable, particularly in an industry where the stakes are exceptionally high.

## Looking Ahead

As I continue to evolve in my role as a support engineer, I remain committed to the principles that have guided my career thus far: precision, continuous improvement, and a holistic understanding of engineering systems. I hope to nurture my safety specialism whilst traversing through the wider support engineering domain. The defence industry, with its complexity and critical importance, offers endless opportunities for growth and innovation.

My journey from safety specialist to support engineer has been a testament to the value of versatility and the importance of integrating different engineering disciplines. It is a path that highlights how foundational skills in one area can provide a robust framework for success in another. As the industry continues to advance, I am excited to be at the forefront, leveraging my diverse expertise to contribute to the safety, reliability, and effectiveness of the UK's defence capabilities.

In conclusion, this transition has reinforced my belief in the importance of lifelong learning, adaptability and embracing new challenges. As I look to the future, I am confident that this journey will continue to be both rewarding and impactful, driving me to further innovate and excel in the defence industry.

