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## Ian Spencer

### Head and Director

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**Royal  
Geographical  
Society**  
with IBG

Advancing geography  
and geographical learning



**Job title:** Head of Foundation of Geospatial Intelligence and Director of the Defence Geographic Centre

**Organisation:** Ministry of Defence

**Location:** Feltham and Northolt, West London and Wyton, Cambridgeshire, UK

#### How did you get to where you are now?

I read Geography BSc at Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (University of London) and then joined the UK Ministry of Defence's Mapping and Charting Establishment in 1990; the organisation then comprised 900 staff and I was one of six graduate trainees appointed that year. At the same time I was elected a Fellow of the RGS. I worked in various MOD roles, including promotion to more senior roles, involving geographic information source evaluation, information management, and product and standards development.

I was promoted in 2004 and became a member of the Defence Geographic Centre Management Team. I moved every couple of years through roles including capability planning, delivery and integration; business and resource management and corporate planning; learning and

development; information management; and geographic research. I was promoted into my current position as Deputy Head NCGI-Foundation and Director of the Defence Geographic Centre in October 2015.

My role includes being "Head of Profession" for civilian geographers in the MOD, and in 2018 I was appointed one of the Deputy Heads of the Government-wide Geography Profession.

#### What do you do as part of your role?

I am the senior civilian Geographer and Geospatial Analyst in the UK Ministry of Defence and one of three Deputy Heads of the UK's National Centre for Geospatial Intelligence (NCGI). I am responsible for delivering global Foundation GEOINT - assured geospatial and environmental information, products and services - to UK Defence, and also to support partners across Government.

My teams comprise 450 civilian and military personnel delivering geographic support and aeronautical navigation support through the Defence Geographic Centre and the No1 Aeronautical Information Documents Unit. I am also responsible for service delivery agreements through which a further 280 personnel within the UK Met Office and UK Hydrographic Office satisfy Defence's global requirements for meteorological, oceanographic and oceanographic support.

My week is split between senior level meetings with colleagues and seniors in the wider MOD, and managing the day to day operations of the organisation through my team of experienced leaders at Civil Service Grade 7 and the military equivalent. I also regularly engage with senior military and civilian officials in other countries, typically travelling abroad up to four times per year.

**W:** [www.rgs.org/geographyprofessionals](http://www.rgs.org/geographyprofessionals)

