

WOMEN IN DEFENCE UK MENTORING PROGRAMME 2025

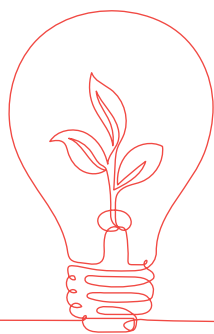


EMPOWERING. ENLIGHTENING. EXCITING



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“Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception.”

RUTH BADER GINSBERG, SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

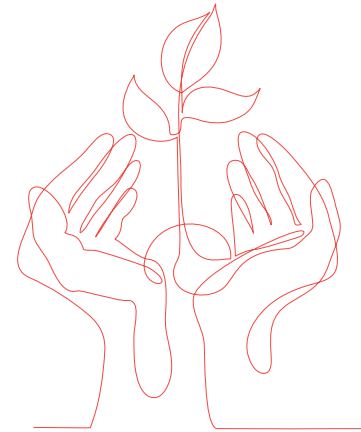
INTRODUCING THE WOMEN IN DEFENCE UK MENTORING PROGRAMME

The Women in Defence UK mentoring programme is a unique cross sector opportunity where mentors and mentees from the defence public sector are matched with mentors and mentees from the defence private sector.

This groundbreaking programme offers an opportunity for talented future leaders to be supported as they navigate challenges, share knowledge, and gain different perspectives. Through participation, they can develop greater confidence, representing an investment in their future, especially during a critical stage in their careers when retention is key.

Programme highlights:

- ▶ A non-residential development opportunity, providing ongoing training that can fit in with other commitments
- ▶ A fantastic tool to attract and retain great talent and demonstrate that investing in careers is a priority
- ▶ A ready-to-go talent initiative that has created proven results across a wide range of both large and small private and public sector organisations.



The overall average representation of women at the Board level across the defence sector is **23%**, a rise of **1%** from the previous year. For managers and senior managers, there has been an increase from **20%** to **23%** and **21%** respectively.

Developed in partnership with Women in Defence UK, the programme is run by Moving Ahead, a specialist in structured, cross-company mentoring and development programmes. Mentoring is one of their expert offerings and a core lever in how they create tangible change. To date, they have supported more than **40,000 participants globally**, from **477 organisations** in over **70 countries** across **30 sectors**.



“ Women in Defence UK is underpinned by ‘Deeds not Words’. One of our ‘deeds’ has been to create the Women in Defence UK mentoring programme with Moving Ahead. Since its inauguration five years ago, nearly 1500 defence people from a wide range of professions, levels, organisations and companies, have benefited from learning from each other as mentors and mentees. We have been delighted with the programme both in content and approach. It leverages that real diversity of thought, those different perspectives or ways of approaching things, that occurs between public and private sectors within a common defence background. ”

ANGELA OWEN OBE, FOUNDER, WOMEN IN DEFENCE UK

HOW THE PROGRAMME WORKS

The Women in Defence UK programme is a ready-to-go, proven, practical and powerful way to support learning and development, with incredible results.

At a glance:

- ▶ Nine-month structured cross-sector mentoring programme
- ▶ Expertly matched pairs, where mentors and mentees from private sector and public sector are paired together to facilitate learning and growth
- ▶ Each organisation selects equal numbers of mentors and mentees
- ▶ A series of digital learning events to engage, educate and inspire
- ▶ World-leading speakers delivering thought provoking and educational content
- ▶ Mentoring training via events and online learning to ensure the opportunity to participate is maximised
- ▶ An unrivalled opportunity for organisations to network and build new relationships

WHO ARE THE MENTORS AND MENTEES?

Mentees: High potential women from all levels of your organisation

Mentors: Experienced leaders from all genders with 15+ years' professional experience

WHY CROSS-SECTOR MENTORING?

What makes this cross-sector approach so special is that it provides mentors and mentees with fresh perspectives and exposure to alternative ways of working. It's a unique chance to learn about how other organisations are doing things differently and a safe space, away from organisational politics, for participants to really open up.



“Cross-company mentoring is invaluable as it allows people to hear and learn from other organisations; how they operate; how they do business. It enables mentors and mentees to share successes with pride.”

TANYA GORDON,
MOVING AHEAD FACILITATOR

FEES (EXCLUSIVE OF VAT)

This is an all inclusive cost for end-to-end management of the programme including all events, matching, reporting and mentoring pairs support. This programme is ready-to-go and easy to implement for organisations taking part. By contributing to this programme participating organisations also directly support Women in Defence UK, with a percentage of the fees being fed straight back to them to support their work.

- ▶ Up to 5 pairs – £5,500 | Up to 10 pairs – £8,800
For every additional five pairs, the cost is £3,300

“From the outset my mentor spotted that I needed a push to change career path. In a few months I have gone from stuck in a rut to getting a promotion and a pay increase.”

MENTEE

THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING



Top three benefits of the programme for your mentees:

01.

The programme will develop mentees' skills, knowledge and confidence

02.

The programme will support mentees in taking control of their careers, providing inspiration, support and challenge to move forward

03.

The programme will expose mentees to a global community of like-minded individuals, expanding their network while also developing networking skills

Top three benefits of the programme for your mentors:

01.

The programme will make the challenges and barriers faced by mentees tangible for mentors, turning them into advocates and facilitators of wider culture change

02.

The programme will help leaders connect to meaning in their own careers and inspire them to stretch further

03.

The programme will give mentors a vital insight into other defence organisations, building and developing transferable skills and expanding their network further

Mentoring will benefit your organisation by:

- ▶ Helping colleagues to feel valued, supported and invested in, benefiting retention, career progression and inclusion
- ▶ Accelerating culture change by breaking down barriers and starting meaningful conversations
- ▶ Creating more empathetic managers and leaders, with a greater understanding of their teams
- ▶ Developing core transferable skills in active listening, mentoring and sponsorship for your colleagues to activate beyond their mentoring relationships
- ▶ Building a truly inclusive mindset, which individuals can take back to the wider organisation to foster relationship building and collaboration

“It has been a two-way relationship with me gaining as much from the partnership as my mentee. We have had useful conversations about organisational change, strategy development –which has hopefully been beneficial to both of us.”

MENTOR

INTRODUCING OUR GOLDEN THREAD FACILITATOR: HANNAH PARSONS

She/her

Moving Ahead facilitator, People and Culture specialist

Hannah brings over 15 years of facilitation experience, shaped by a deep curiosity and a passion for helping people thrive. She specialises in supporting organisations to build inclusive and engaging workplace cultures, enabling leaders to strengthen trust, harness diverse thinking and create the conditions for others to succeed.

Her approach is grounded in experience across a wide range of people-focused disciplines. This breadth allows her to draw on rich insights that deepen learning and spark meaningful reflection. Known for her warm style and agile communication skills, Hannah builds rapport quickly and creates a safe, energising environment where groups feel confident to engage, share and grow.



**HANNAH
PARSONS**

Moving Ahead facilitator,
People and Culture specialist

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR ORGANISATIONS WISHING TO TAKE PART

- ▶ Identifying a dedicated Programme Partner
- ▶ Conducting a strategic selection of mentors and mentees, where participation is voluntary
- ▶ Selecting mentees from the organisation's internal talent pool
- ▶ Internal briefing and communications to selected mentors and mentees in advance of the kick-off event
- ▶ A robust internal oversight and commitment from an internal senior sponsor

“ I personally believe that the scheme is a fantastic idea and more people should be ‘encouraged’ to be involved as if I had participated in the scheme earlier in my own career, I would have gained huge benefit... My mentee ‘match’ was incredibly strong – our aligned values, challenges within leadership, growth and development mirrored in many areas which really enhanced the value that we both gained from our relationship. I hope that our relationship will endure post the scheme. ”

MENTOR

Selection

It is critical that all mentors and mentees are committed to the programme and prepared to make time to meet their selected mentoring partner. Participation in the programme is voluntary, however, we will support you in finding the best approach that works for your organisation from the invitation, application and nomination stages.

Timings

A mentoring relationship will be nine months.

Meetings

One-to-one mentoring meetings take place monthly or, at a minimum, every six weeks for an hour or two. We encourage monthly meetings in order to build up sufficient momentum over the nine-month period. Virtual mentoring and learning sessions are encouraged when the mentor and/or mentee is not able to attend meetings and events in person. The mentoring team will provide information on how to make the most out of virtual mentoring.

Matching process

Matching is carried out based on the participant's profile, experience and skills. Our bespoke matching process creates unbiased mentoring matches at scale, while our mentoring experts oversee everything manually. We've learned that contrast is a powerful factor in successful mentoring, so our process is designed to connect two people who would be unlikely to meet but who can build rapport around shared values and interests. This approach broadens not only their networks, but their perspectives.

Events

Creating an engaged community and giving participants unrivalled networking opportunities is absolutely key to the success of the programme. The nine-month programme is structured around a launch, midway and celebration event, featuring world-class learning experts and faculty from Moving Ahead to equip and develop the skills of mentors and mentees.

Confidentiality

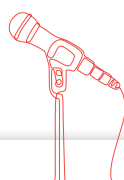
Participants are asked to respect confidentiality and existing employment relationships.

Measuring progress

The mentoring team will seek regular feedback and provide progress reports throughout the scheme.

“ I am grateful to have had this opportunity and for the investment in me. My mentor has enlightened me not only to my own value but to think a bit differently as well. I am institutionalised by being at my organisation for so long and to hear a differing view point has helped me to see things from other perspectives. I have gained confidence from this scheme, thank you. ”

MENTEE



*Focus on mentoring content and training

†Specific developmental learning opportunity

LAUNCH EVENT*	DEVELOPMENT LAB ONE†	MIDWAY EVENT*	DEVELOPMENT LAB TWO†	CLOSE CELEBRATION*
22nd October 2025	28th January 2026	26th March 2026	20th May 2026	25th June 2026

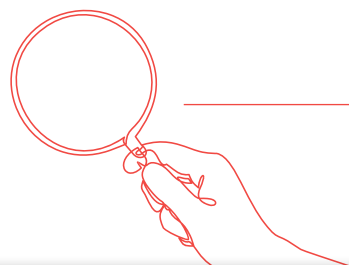
Pairs meet every 4-6 weeks throughout the 9-month mentoring journey and have access to an online learning platform for event recordings and resources. Participants have ongoing support from the Moving Ahead team throughout the duration of the programme.

Over five years, we've welcomed...

nearly **1,500**
participants

from **32** unique
organisations

and different areas of the
public and private sectors



PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

Nearly **75%** of mentors and mentees
would recommend the programme to a
friend or colleague

Nearly **75%** of mentees
say their mentor has been a
guide and support to them



THE IMPACT

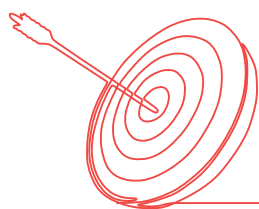
During the 2023/2024 cohort:

71% of mentees were
already promoted,
expanded responsibilities
or moved roles

Over 60% of mentees
saw improvements to their
confidence, resilience and
empowerment to
problem solve

46% of mentees saw the
workplace differently, with
more than 40% feeling
their mentor sparked
ideas they wouldn't
have had otherwise

30% of mentors
said their awareness of
the barriers for others
in the workplace has
heightened





TO DISCUSS JOINING THE WOMEN IN DEFENCE UK
MENTORING PROGRAMME 2026,

or if you are interested in learning more, please contact the Moving Ahead
and Women in Defence UK mentoring team at

womenindefence@movingahead.org

ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN

SIGN UP HERE ►

