

2024

Social Value Impact Report —

January – December 2024

Accelerating gender equity in defence.

A message from Angela

Deeds not Words

Without the active collaboration of our forty wonderful defence Partners, the impact of Women in Defence UK would be a fraction of what it is today.

Our Partners recognise the brilliant people who work in the sector by nominating them for an Award, share initiatives that work as well as frustrations that hinder progress through their participation in our Critical Mass Community, and have been enthusiastic champions of our work.

Thank you for everything you do and enjoy the report!

Angela Owen OBE
Founder Women in Defence UK



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Introduction —

Women in Defence UK – Accelerating Gender Equity

Women in Defence UK is an independent not-for-profit organisation, founded in 2011. With a robust network of over 16,000 individuals and 40 Partners spanning every level of the defence sector, we are uniquely positioned to stimulate substantial change. Our purpose of accelerating gender equity in the defence sector, is guided by Emmeline Pankhurst's principle of 'Deeds not Words'. Working as one of the three legs of the Women in Defence Charter, we strive to support the Charter ambition of 30% of all roles to be filled by women by 2030. By achieving this critical mass, we will speed-up the transition towards a more balanced, inclusive and equitable defence enterprise. Our influential network enables the sharing of best practices and the sparking of innovative thinking.

We inspire through our annual Awards, recognising and celebrating exceptional people in defence and offer support and new perspectives through our renowned cross-sector Mentoring programme. We challenge the norms and prompt progressive thinking through in-depth discussions with Senior Officers and Officials. Our unwavering commitment to betterment of the defence ecosystem has sparked progress; from influencing policy changes to fostering inclusivity in defence organisations. The scale of the change we effect, however, is linked to the active participation of our Partners and wider community.

The social value model —

The UK government's Social Value Model became mandatory in January 2021 in all central government contracts. As a result, social value is taken into account for all major central government procurements and is required to be explicitly evaluated. A mandatory minimum weighting of 10% for social value is applied at the tender evaluation stage. This ensures that social value carries a heavy enough score to be a differentiating factor in the evaluation of bids. The Social Value Model describes the government's social value priorities for procurement. It includes a menu of social value objectives for central government departments to select from and include in their procurement.

These objectives centre around four themes:

1. **Tackling Economic Inequality**
2. **Fighting Climate Change**
3. **Equal Opportunity**
4. **Wellbeing**

The model aims to make it easier for central government departments to assess and evaluate the social value offered in tenders and manage the social value delivered in contracts. In 2023, Women in Defence UK launched an initiative to publish an annual report highlighting the impact that the Women in Defence UK partnerships are having on the activities we support and the social value outcomes we hope to drive.

Our work —



Critical Mass —

We are uniquely positioned across the breadth of the defence enterprise and up and down organisational structures. We are committed to achieving **critical mass**.



Inspire —

We **inspire** through our annual Awards which showcase the brilliant people who work in Defence and via our cross-sector programme.



Challenge —

We **challenge** thinking by interviewing Senior Officers/ Officials and engaging with them on the headline topics.

Women in Defence UK's priorities support delivery of the Social Value outcomes with a focus on equal opportunity

Equal opportunity

Our 2024 Critical Mass Summit, 'Changing the Face of Defence', focussed on how to keep women in the sector.

Tackling economic inequality

The Critical Mass Community events create an opportunity for our Partners to collaborate on attracting and retaining women in defence.

Wellbeing

The Critical Mass events and other networking events promote wellbeing and social connection in our community.

Equal opportunity

The annual Awards recognise individuals and teams, providing opportunities for them to grow, helping to accelerate gender equity.

Fighting climate change

We refocused the Innovation Award to include sustainability, raising awareness in Defence, such as removing space debris from orbit.

Tackling economic inequality

Our Women in Defence UK Mentoring Programme and the Job site help to tackle economic inequality.

The Awards focus on efforts to tackle economic inequality, for instance apprenticeship schemes, promoting STEM and careers in defence in schools, and fighting systemic inequalities in defence organisations.

Equal opportunity

The interview with the First Sea Lord examined the NSI investigation into misconduct in the Submarine Service and what changes are being made to change the culture in the Royal Navy.

Equal opportunity

The interview with the CEO DE&S investigated achieving 30% women by 2030 on the board and in the workplace. It particularly focused on STEM and defence, and how industry apprenticeships schemes are moving the dial on gender balance and improving the image of defence.

Our initiatives —



Critical Mass – Summit



Aim – to help create a Critical Mass of women by sharing leading practice from across the sector

Our annual Summit - 'Changing the Face of Defence' brings the Critical Mass Community together to hear new ideas and perspectives.

Our 2024 Summit focused on 'how do we keep women in the sector' and welcomed three fantastic speakers from outside of the sector; Elliott Rae (pictured opposite), founder of [Parenting Out Loud](#), who talked about how supporting dads at work helps women; Eleanor Mills, founder of [Noon](#), who told us about Queenagers (women aged 45+) and what an under-valued demographic they are and Charlotte Woodworth of [Business in the Community](#) who shared the latest insight from their Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality. We also welcomed Chief of Defence People – Vice Admiral Phil Hally and Sam des Forges, Director of Conduct, Equity and Justice, who updated us on progress within the MOD.

// The speakers were fantastic and offered a new perspective on issues we were already familiar with.

// So inspiring and full of energy! I loved and appreciated the different perspectives which are so important!



Critical Mass – Community –



A Community for our Partners to meet and share new ideas and initiatives that work. Our Partners lead the sessions

The Community meetings so far have covered:

- 'Gender Decoders in Recruitment Advertisements' hosted by BAE Systems
- 'Back to basics – Business critical understanding' focus on the use of data in ED&I hosted by Babcock
- 'Digital Skills Transformation in the Defence Sector.' hosted by QA
- 'Getting Senior Leadership buy in by making EDI a business problem' hosted by Northrop Grumman
- 'Understanding Social Value' hosted by Leidos
- 'Women's Empowerment' hosted by Costain
- 'Dealing with challenging situations to drive an equitable and inclusive environment' hosted by Frazer Nash Consultancy
- 'Attract, recruit, develop and train: How to get more women into the UK technology sector' hosted by Sopra Steria
- 'Men Advocating Real Change' hosted by Amentum



The 2024 Awards in Words and Deeds —



The Awards encompass the whole of the defence sector – Armed Forces, MOD Civil Service, industry, 3rd sector, GCHQ, MI5, NCA. In total around 3700 nominations have been received over the past nine years.

Captain Victoria Kinkaid announced as Woman of the Year

Her work champions women's health in the Armed Forces and the wider world

[View the 2024 highlights video](#)

480+

Nominations were received

this year from around 60 separate defence companies and the Royal Navy, Army, RAF, MoD Civil Service, dstl, GCHQ, MI5 and NCA.

May 15

63

Individuals and teams announced

as the Women in Defence UK Awards 2024 Shortlist.

September 10

30

Fabulous Finalists

were chosen by our seven Winners Judges were announced.

October 08

500

Defence people attended the 2024 Awards Dinner at the Guildhall, London.

November 19

76

companies, Royal Navy, Army, RAF, MoD, Cabinet Office, Australian High Commission, MPs, Secretary of State for Defence and nearly the whole Ministerial Team for MOD attended.

40

groups of friends and family watched the ceremony on the livestream.

December 4

March 8

Nominations opened on International Women's Day

May–August

27

Judges selected a Shortlist

Judges included previous Women of the Year and representatives from the Royal Navy, Army, RAF, MoD, Defence Industry, HMG and EDI experts.

October 02

160+

Attendees celebrated the Shortlisters

Friends, family, colleagues and members of the defence community celebrated at a drinks reception in the House of Commons overlooking the Thames.

November 15

We launched the new International Award

created to recognise exceptional contributions by women in the defence of their own country rather than the UK. This year, we were privileged to present the inaugural Award to the distinguished women serving their country as part of the war in Ukraine, acknowledging their remarkable bravery, resilience, and dedication amid the ongoing conflict in their homeland.

The Award was **officially presented during a ceremony** attended by His Majesty's Ambassador to Ukraine, Mr Martin Harris CMG OBE, who handed over the prestigious accolade to Ukrainian servicewomen.

// It was so valuable to connect with other winners and hear their stories, and the guest speaker Helen was just incredible and so inspiring.

Mentoring Programme



The Women in Defence UK Mentoring Programme, delivered by Moving Ahead, was created five years ago as 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. To date, the programme has welcomed **nearly 1500 participants from 32 unique organisations**. On the programme this year, we have welcomed **320 participants** from **19 unique organisations**.

The Mentoring Programme has helped to meet social value theme areas tackling economic equality, equal opportunity and well-being. We will continue to fuel the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships for women in defence and grow social impact on tackling economic equality, equal opportunity and wellbeing.

// **My mentor has greatly helped me with my confidence and has supported me through a challenging time at work by listening and supporting the actions I have made, challenging me to go outside my comfort zone.**

MENTEE



*STATISTICS FROM THE 2023/2024 MENTORING PROGRAMME

Challenge —



Challenging established beliefs and practices is an integral part of our work to accelerate gender equity in the defence sector

Through thought-provoking interviews with Senior Officers and Officials and comprehensive dialogues on headline topics, we stimulate fresh perspectives and encourage the defence sector to reassess its practices. Our aim is not just to question the status quo, but to propose practical solutions that promote equity and inclusivity.

Founder, Angela Owen, asks the tough questions about gender balance and equity within the MoD. What lessons have been learned that can influence wider defence? What changes have they made to further women's, men's and all individuals' opportunities within the MOD? With our external viewpoint, we are able to raise questions and issues with senior leaders

that might not otherwise reach them. By continually challenging norms, we will foster an environment that recognises and respects the unique role of women who work in defence of the UK.

In 2024, we interviewed the following:

Andy Start – CEO Defence Equipment and Support

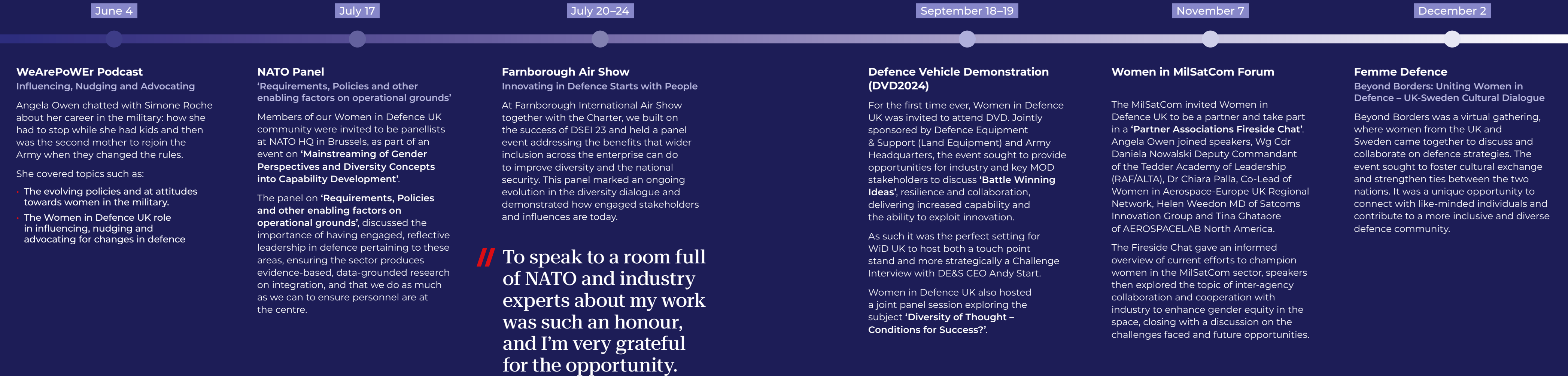
Adm Sir Ben Key – First Sea Lord

All interviews are livestreamed, recorded and then shared on our **YouTube Channel** (@womenindefenceuk6756) for all of our community to watch.

// Incredible insights!



Panel events 2025



// To speak to a room full of NATO and industry experts about my work was such an honour, and I’m very grateful for the opportunity.

TARA ZAMMIT

Our Digital Community

Women in Defence UK has established a strong brand with high social impact

We have a significant digital presence and extensive reach across multiple online platforms: LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, website (updated in 2023 to reflect our growth) and mailing list totalling **16,000+ members and followers**.

In 2024, over the two and a half weeks spanning the Awards Dinner and helped by our Partners, we achieved an **impressive total reach of 24.2m on X**. This increases our impact far beyond the immediate community and underlines the substantial influence and engagement we command online.

Our website experienced 15,500+ thousand visits in 2024, with the Awards pages receiving the most clicks.

visits to the Women in Defence UK website

15.5
thousand



mailing list
members + followers

16+
thousand



total reach on X
for the Awards
Dinner 2024

24.2
million



Tackling economic inequality —

Policy Outcome: Create new businesses, new jobs and new skills

Why is this a priority?

The Industrial Strategy sets out government's vision to make the United Kingdom the best place to start and grow a business. The strategy also describes government's plan to help businesses create better higher-paying jobs in every part of the United Kingdom. Developing the skill levels of the current and future workforce is the essential enabler for this.

Our impact

The Critical Mass initiative and Mentoring Programme seek to improve attraction, retention and skills development in the defence sector.

Empowering women to reach their full economic potential

The Mentoring Programme empowers women to reach their full economic potential by encouraging them to learn new skills and knowledge and build their confidence.

Somewhere in the zone when women reach 20 to 30% of an institution, things begin to change. Our Critical Mass Community is sharing their company challenges in the gender space, and, importantly, how they are overcoming those challenges.

of mentees feel confident in making decisions	of mentees are empowered to problem-solve effectively	of mentees feel positive about their long-term prospects in their organisation	community events	companies are active in the community	average attendees per session
64%	62%	45%	8	20+	20-40

// Empowering women to reach their full economic potential not only tangibly supports the key goal of reducing gender inequality, but also has tremendous significance on the advancement, competitiveness, and future-readiness of economies worldwide.

In this regard, empirical evidence shows that women's economic empowerment and the closing of gender gaps in key areas is associated with positive macroeconomic outcomes, including higher economic growth, lower inequality, increased productivity, better financial sector outcomes and greater financial stability.

IMF



Fighting climate change —

Effective stewardship of the environment

Why is this a priority?

Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out goals for improving the environment within a generation and details how it will work with communities and businesses to do this. To meet the goals and targets it has set, government has identified six key areas in the plan through which it will focus action. The Social Value reporting is based around the reduction of three of the target areas: greenhouse gases, waste, and water. In addition, there are Metrics relating to protecting and improving the environment and creating green spaces.

Our impact

The Women in Defence UK Innovation and Sustainability Award, introduced in 2023, celebrates those women who have developed innovative solutions (eg technology, capability, ways of working), and/or delivered outstanding sustainability initiatives that strengthen the effect of the UK defence mission.

We have celebrated:

2023

Finalists were from the National Crime Agency, MI5 and Uplift360. The winner was recognised for her work in developing Greentech and helping make defence a more sustainable place.

2024

Finalists were from Airbus and GCHQ. Finalists are delivering impact on sustainability in the fast-growing Space sector, including a project to remove space debris from orbit, and sustainable life cycle management for spacecraft meaning that future space missions will adhere to environmentally responsible practices.

// Climate change will affect the way we protect, operate and fight - from the warming of our oceans through to the increased requirement for humanitarian and disaster relief. We know the way we conduct defence and the tasks we are called on to carry out will be forced to change as we adapt to new environmental conditions.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC APPROACH 2021

Equal opportunity —

Policy Outcome: Tackle economic inequality

Why is this a priority?

Government is committed to tackling inequality and giving everyone across the country the opportunity to fulfil their potential. The Good Work Plan affirms government’s ambition that all work should be fair and decent, and that everyone, regardless of where they live in the UK or which sector they work in, should be able to benefit from high quality jobs.

Government has so far implemented many good practices to advance the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the workforce. However, there are still challenges and barriers to realizing equal opportunity for women in defence which need to be addressed.

Our impact

The business case for diversity is well known and well made. Diverse voices that can be heard in an inclusive culture bring economic and operational benefits. In the Defence sector according to the latest figures from the the Women in Defence Charter Data Report 2024, the current gender balance is 25% female. The Charter has an ambition that 30% of all roles in the sector will be filled by women by 2030. Much of the Women in Defence UK work supports this ambition.

Achieving at least 30% female representation at all levels by 2030 through...

... creating a critical mass of knowledge and leading practice

... inspiring by recognising individuals and teams and supporting through mentoring



were received from over 70 companies and organisations from across the sector

480+ nominations

60+ companies represented

at our Critical Mass Summit. Companies and organisations heard new and different thinking from experts and organisations from outside and inside of defence on some unexpected solutions to the retention conundrum

Mentors* say that the mentee helped them to see the workplace differently

28%

Mentees* have been promoted

16%

expanded responsibilities

36%

moved roles since the programme began

19%

*STATISTICS FROM THE 2023/2024 MENTORING PROGRAMME

Well-being —

Improve health and wellbeing

Why is this a priority?

Government encourages employers to better support all employees, including those with mental health problems, to remain in and thrive through work. Government is monitoring progress under this policy outcome by recording the proportion of suppliers in the contract supply chain who have implemented measures to improve the health and wellbeing of employees.

Our impact

The defence sector can promote the well-being and retention of women by providing information, moral support, social connection, and opportunities for mentoring and professional networking.

Supporting women working in defence’s wellbeing through...

... opportunities for mentoring and networking		... sharing best practice at our Critical Mass Events		... challenging established beliefs and practices at our Challenge Interviews	
people had opportunities to network at our awards and critical mass events	participants in our 2024 mentoring scheme	Focussed on retaining women in the sector			
1000≈	320		Meet the Queenagers – value of retaining women at 45+ Eleanor Mills, founder of Noon (pictured opposite)		
30%	62%	Parenting Out Loud – why supporting working dads is key to gender equality		By continually challenging norms, we will foster an environment that recognises and respects the unique role of women in defence.	

Our Partnership Packages —



Pankhurst Partner

Our Pankhurst partnership offer is named after Emmeline Pankhurst, the famous suffragette who started the movement and fought hard for equal voting rights for women. We use her famous 'Deeds not Words' as our slogan.

Each of the Pankhurst partnerships is aligned with one of our purposes – Critical Mass, Challenge and Inspire.



Lovelace Partner

Our Lovelace partnership offer is named after Ada Lovelace, mathematician, who is regarded as being the world's first computer programmer.

Our Lovelace partnerships include our Critical Mass work and have a particular focus on the Women in Defence UK Awards.



Fawcett Partner

Our Fawcett partnership offer is named after Millicent Fawcett, another famous suffragette who was the head of the National Union for Women's Suffrage Societies and whose aim was to win women's suffrage through debate and peaceful marches.

Whilst all our partnerships are underpinned by the same common purpose and Critical Mass goal, our Fawcett partnerships also include a table at the Awards Dinner.



Franklin Partner

Our Franklin partnership offer is named after Rosalind Franklin, a British chemist whose pioneering work was central to the understanding of the molecular structures of DNA, RNA, viruses, coal, and graphite.

Franklin focuses on our Critical Mass work. This work brings together our Partners into a Critical Mass Community to share gender equity challenges and how they are over-coming those challenges. The output is a shared critical mass of leading practice and knowledge that should really start to move the dial towards achieving a critical mass of women in the sector.

We couldn't do any of this without our partners —

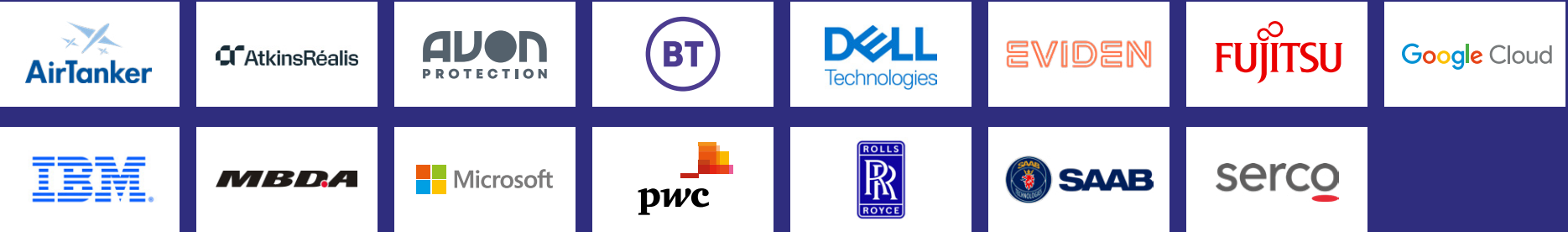
Pankhurst Partners



Lovelace Partners



Fawcett Partners



Franklin Partners



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DEFENCE