



Office for
Veterans' Affairs

AN EMPLOYERS' GUIDE TO HIRING VETERANS



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FOREWORD

“I am determined to make the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran. Creating and investing in opportunities for veterans to gain employment and develop fulfilling, rewarding careers after service is key to achieving this.

Veterans are one of our strongest assets – to their community, employers, the economy and to society overall. It’s up to all of us to harness and make the most of their potential.

I’m proud to launch this guide. It showcases best practice developed in the UK to support our veterans and Armed Forces community into employment, providing employers, large and small across the UK, with the tools, information and guidance they need to make the most of what our veterans have to offer.

Hiring veterans is one of the best business decisions you can make, and this guide will help you to make it happen.”



The Rt. Hon. Johnny Mercer MP, Minister for Veterans' Affairs

INTRODUCTION

There are over 2 million veterans in the UK, with over 13,000 individuals leaving the Armed Forces each year. The majority of those leaving service are of working age, in search of securing the next step in their civilian career after service.

In the UK, veterans are defined as anyone who has served for at least one day in the Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve) or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations.

Some of those who have served in the Armed Forces will choose to define themselves as a 'service leaver' or 'ex-forces', which are terms that can be used alongside or instead of 'veteran'.

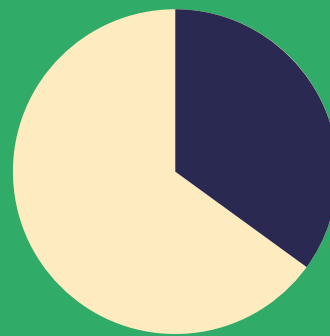
The latest Census (2021) tells us that at least 1 in 25 people are veterans, with just under half (47%) of working age (under 65), 14% are women and around 4% identify as having a non-white ethnic background.

Veteran employment in the UK is strong, but there is still more that can be done to improve access to career opportunities and better match veterans with positions that make use of their skills.

By making these opportunities available and putting the best practices in place, we have the potential to make sure that veterans and the wider community across the UK can benefit from what they have to offer.

Employing veterans in your organisation is one of the best business decisions that you can make.

At least
1 IN 25
people are
veterans



47%
of veterans
are of working
age (under
65 years old)



14%
of veterans
are women



4%
of veterans
identify as having
a non-white ethnic
background

Almost all (92%) working age veterans have qualifications and are more likely to have gained these qualifications through work (60%) compared to non-veterans (43%).

When you hire veterans, you have immediate access to someone with training, qualifications and valuable experience all gained during their time in service.

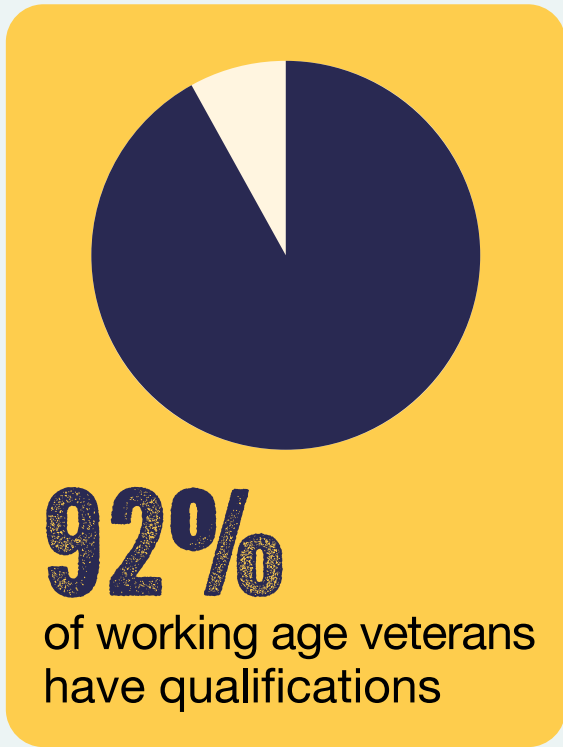
In the UK, the majority of employers asked (66%) are interested in having, or having more, UK Armed Forces ex-service personnel in their organisation.

Those already employing veterans in their workforce reported that they can readily identify proficiency in key skills and attributes which are of high value in today's civilian workspaces including:

- **strong work ethic**
- **problem solving**
- **leadership**
- **communication skills**
- **dedication and analytical skills**

- at a rate above their contemporaries and colleagues.¹

¹ YouGov Report: Perceptions of UK Armed Forces ex-service personnel On behalf of the Office for Veterans' Affairs, November 2022



Over half (53%) of employers report that the veterans they employ are promoted more quickly in comparison to their colleagues.²

National Insurance Relief

Another benefit of hiring veterans is the 12 months of National Insurance contribution holiday available to those employing a veteran in their first civilian position after service.

Find out more online about your eligibility as an employer and how to claim this relief: www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-national-insurance-contributions-relief-for-veterans-as-an-employer

“Many skills developed within the Armed Forces community are in high demand in the commercial world of work; cyber security, drone technology, telecommunications, logistics, prosthetics, and artificial intelligence, to name just a few. It is likely that veterans can contribute and flourish in all settings after serving their country so well.”



Ren Kapur MBE, Founder and Director, X-Forces Enterprise, FSB Armed Forces Champion for Small Businesses.

² Deloitte, Veterans Work – 2016

THE JOURNEY

This guide offers advice and guidance on how to recruit and support the career development of veterans, alongside case studies that showcase examples of where best practice has been developed and brought forward.

It is important to remember that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution to how your business can best benefit from the value that veterans have to offer.

Wherever you are in the journey, this guide is here to help you.

Whether you’re self-employed, a small & medium sized enterprise (SME), a larger corporation, third sector organisation or even a public sector employer – this guide is designed to help you gain as much value as possible from having veterans and members of the Armed Forces community as part of your workforce.

The guide identifies 2 stages in the veterans employment journey to you as an employer, which are:

- **Recruitment**
- **Retention & Development**

“When I transitioned into the sector, I was overwhelmed by how much employers wanted people like me to be in their organisations and how much they celebrated people with my background, being a female, being part of their world. I think it has been phenomenal.”



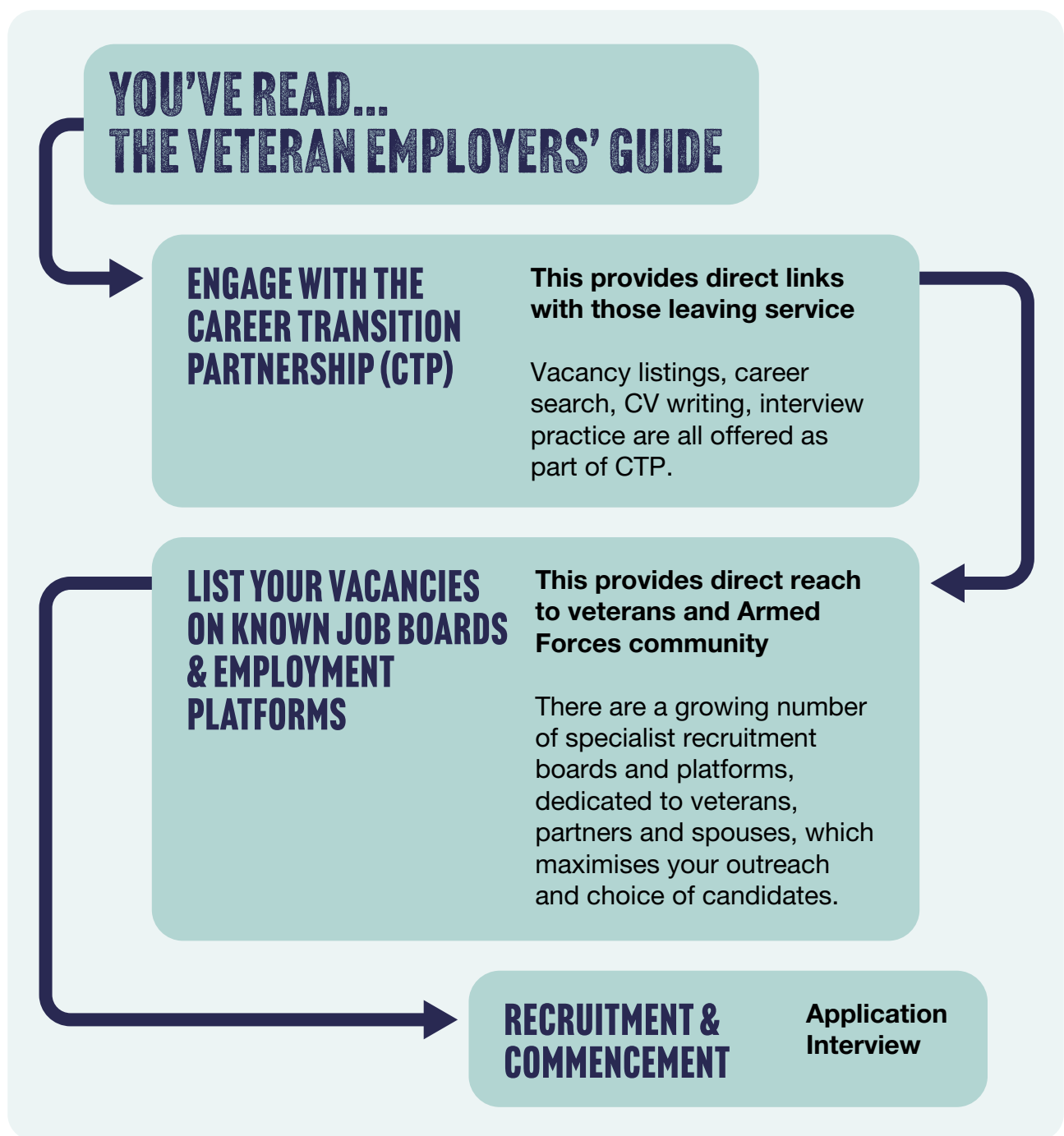
Charlotte, Veteran and Risk Operations & Innovation Director, Aviva

RECRUITMENT

IT ALL BEGINS WITH RECRUITMENT

Employers who benefit the most from the value that veterans have to offer make full use of the resources, support, recruitment opportunities and tailored employment programmes available to them.

The steps outlined in this section of the guide will help you to raise awareness and promote your business as an employer of choice to veterans and members of the Armed Forces community. It will also enable you to attract veterans to your business.



“We’ve helped influence and shape over 6,500 veterans’ transition journeys in the last 10 years , and it is clear the value, relevant transferrable skills and very tangible benefit they can bring to not only Deloitte, but the Finance & Professional Services sector and UK workforce more broadly.”



Chris Recchia, Veteran and Partner at Deloitte and Partner in Charge of Military Transition and Talent Programme

Career Transition Partnership

The [Career Transition Partnership \(CTP\)](#) is hosted by the Ministry of Defence. It provides support to those leaving service for the first two years, and connects employers to those looking for work.

The team can support you with advertising **local, regional and national positions** to service leavers and the team’s **account managers** can help to tailor your recruitment options to meet your business needs – ranging from **small-scale vacancies to larger-scale recruitment campaigns**.

This can include advice on how best to communicate the values of your business and the skills you are in search of in a way that is accessible and understandable to service leavers.

Service leavers have access through CTP to CV workshops, interview skills, career scoping, and researching and applying for jobs. This means they will be ready to engage with you as an employer and the opportunities you have on offer.

Defence Relationship Management

Defence Relationship Management (DRM) offers advice and support on employing members of the Armed Forces community, and enables organisations to develop a mutually beneficial working relationship with the Ministry of Defence (MOD).



This includes raising the profile of the benefits of signing the **Armed Forces Covenant**, and achieving the **Bronze, Silver** and **Gold Defence Employers Recognition Scheme** awards. There is more information on these specific initiatives provided later in the guide.

DRM also works with employers on how best they can support and receive the value that is offered by veterans, reservists, cadet force adult volunteers, partners and spouses as part of their workforce.

Forces Employment Charity

Provides employers with support in recruiting, retaining, promoting and supporting military candidates through the application process. With access to over 20,000 ex-Forces personnel every year, they help employers recruit experienced individuals who bring a wide-ranging list of transferable skills acquired during their time in the Armed Forces.

You can find out more online at: www.forcesemployment.org.uk



BEST PRACTICE

Top hints and tips to attracting and hiring veterans and members of the Armed Forces community.

Tailored training and recruitment programmes: The very best way to recruit veterans is through a structured programme. A **tailored recruitment programme** can secure an intake of those with skills that your business needs, and position you as an employer of choice for those leaving the Armed Forces. This can include opportunities for placements and experience alongside training or provision of qualifications, to supplement the skills and expertise that veterans already have when leaving service.

Applications, CV and interview: Veterans will often focus on practical points about their time in service and talk about what ‘we’ rather than ‘I’ did to accomplish goals and overcome barriers. This doesn’t always tell you as an employer what you need to know. Providing **opportunities during application and interview for veterans to talk openly about their strengths and skills and how these are relevant to you as the employer** can help to translate what they have to offer in a way that makes sense for your business. **Fully explained role descriptions which avoid industry-specific phrases and acronyms** have the best chance of being understood by veterans. Encouraging hiring managers and business partners to integrate this approach and having **ex-military employees as part of the panel at interviews** all helps to bring out the best in veteran candidates applying to positions in your business.

Engagement and outreach: Veterans need to know about the great work your organisation is doing to recruit them and the opportunities available to develop their careers with you. This could range from **dedicated veterans recruitment programmes, social media promotion and becoming a visible champion and advocate for veterans employment.** Outreach is key to success, by combining effective action with visibility and active promotion. Your business can benefit from accessing the support available from specialist organisations such as the **Career Transition Partnership (CTP)**, charities like **Forces Employment Charity, RBLI Lifeworks**, and many more.

Forces Friendly: Becoming ‘Forces Friendly’ is about how your organisation supports veterans and the wider Armed Forces community. **Promoting and showcasing what your organisation does** to support veterans is key to attracting them to your business. The better a reputation your organisation has for being ‘forces friendly’ the more likely you are to attract veterans with in-demand skills, qualifications and expertise. In support of this, you can sign the Armed Forces Covenant and have your commitment recognised by achieving Defence Employers Recognition Scheme accreditation.

CASE STUDIES

Examples of tailored recruitment programmes from among leading UK employers.

Military Talent Scheme, by Barclays

is open to any service leaver – regardless of service, rank or experience – who is in their resettlement period for the duration of the scheme. It is a 10 to 12 week work placement programme, where no prior experience in finance is required by those taking part. It provides supported opportunities for veterans to network with colleagues in the business, workshops to develop resumes and explore what their future career paths at the company could



look like. All this while rotating between various areas of the business allowing them to build up their experience and identify the area best suited for their new career.

RT Infrastructure Solutions is an SME infrastructure and engineering services provider in the UK. It has been actively recruiting and retaining veterans since its inception.

The company provides information on career opportunities, and assistance with job applications and interviews. It runs this through dedicated training and development programmes, careers fairs and workshops and a supportive and inclusive working environment.



Military Technical Account Manager Programme, by Amazon Web Services (AWS)

is an accelerated career on-boarding programme for technical account manager (TAM) roles within AWS. The academy programme combines 16 weeks intensive technical training with on-the-job learning to develop individuals into Associate TAMs. The programme enables the business to fill a critical need in technical talent whilst providing career opportunities for the veteran community.



Military Service Leavers Pathway into Policing, by Nottinghamshire Police & University of Derby, a pilot venture for veterans to become serving police officers, by providing a supported programme of accredited Police Education Qualifications Framework training while resettling from the military. The programme provides everything needed to secure the roles, by combining academic qualifications with practical experience and training.



The **UK Civil Service** has a variety of recruitment programmes in place, enabling tailored entry routes into Civil Service careers with opportunities for ongoing career development and learning.

A Great Place to Work for Veterans enables veterans to progress to the next round of recruitment on advertised vacancies.

Going Forward into Employment provides improved life chances and social mobility opportunities for veterans and others through Civil Service employment. It enables direct appointment to roles usually up to first line manager for a maximum two year fixed term appointment.



The **#YourSkillsYourFuture** programme, centered on Wales, supports veterans and their families who wish to pursue a new career into the Civil Service. Facilitated through close collaboration between UK Government departments, Welsh Government, public sector, academia and charities, the programme increases employability skills and provides guidance and support through the application process.



RETENTION & DEVELOPMENT

RECRUITMENT IS IMPORTANT - BUT IT'S
JUST THE BEGINNING OF A CAREER

Employers who benefit the most from the value that veterans have to offer provide opportunities for continued progression and development, and create a culture of inclusion and belonging for those who join their business.

The steps outlined in this section of the guide will help you to retain the talent of the veterans and members of the Armed Forces community that you have recruited into your workforce, and will in turn help them to achieve rewarding and fulfilling careers within your business.



“Veterans bring with them an inherent sense of duty, and if they come in and feel that they’re building a career and belong in an organisation, that is often rewarded with loyalty.”



Kevin Gartside, Veteran and Head of Military & Veteran Outreach at Barclays

BEST PRACTICE

Top hints and tips to retaining and developing veterans and members of the Armed Forces community in your workforce.

Talent development: Dedicated talent development programmes have a demonstrated track record of success in improving capability and performance, and increased likelihood of retention. This often focuses on **activity after the recruitment stage** such as **learning & development** and **progression**. This can help to bring out the best in your people, unlocking existing potential as well as introducing new skills and expertise. This can help with **retention** within your workforce, as it provides opportunities for career advancement leading to an increased sense of fulfilment and achievement for those working within your company.

Mentoring and coaching: This provides the opportunity for someone who is newer to your workforce the opportunity to **get to know, trust and learn from the experience of someone who has already been through it**. This can help with **navigating the world of civilian employment, identify opportunities for progression or promotion and help them to understand and navigate their career path** with you as an employer. Many veterans choose to become mentors to other veterans and members of the Armed Forces community, but **neither the mentor or mentee need to have served time within the Armed Forces to be an effective support partner to the other**.

“Initially, it was quite overwhelming, attempting to navigate the world of business and a sea of unfamiliar acronyms and processes. If you had told me 4 years ago that I would be building business cases, responsible for delivery costs and budgeting and managing an ever expanding team of people and genuinely not feeling out of place, I wouldn't have believed it possible and it is certainly not what I expected upon leaving the military – but it's surprising how far those soft skills that are often not highlighted, are able to aid in setting you apart in a new career.”



Kayleigh, Veteran and Head of Delivery
for Intelligence Services Centre, Deloitte

Networks: There can be similarities but also significant differences between a career in service and a civilian career. An internal source of support in your organisation such as a **peer network or employee resource group** can help veterans to make their adjustment from service to civilian culture workplaces as smooth and streamlined as possible.

Line Manager capability: Veterans are well suited for positions of management and leadership, regardless of rank during their time of service. This is because the ability to lead and work well with others is instilled within veterans during their time of service, and can translate particularly powerfully when applied to a civilian setting. You can make the most of the value veterans have to offer by offering **opportunities to further develop and utilise their leadership and management capabilities.**

Internal awareness: Working with your business's managers and leaders to raise awareness and develop an understanding of the added benefits that veterans can bring to their team can help to further embed all of the practices detailed throughout this guide. By **pro-actively promoting this throughout your business**, you can make sure that the benefits are not limited to only one area.

Self-identification: This is a simple yet effective way of taking stock and charting progress of the veterans employed in your business. This can include **making the option available at application for veterans to indicate their status, through to introducing a 'veterans marker' in your internal human resource platforms and employee records.**

Self-identification is about more than how many veterans are employed in your business. It enables you as an employer to chart the progress of their career within your business. An added benefit of self-ID is that it demonstrates with data, the value and longevity of veterans employment and can help to establish an evidence base in support of implementing the range of other beneficial culture and practices.

CASE STUDIES

A selection of case studies demonstrating how supporting veterans and members of the Armed Forces community after the initial stages of recruitment can help to give your business an advantage in gaining the most from what they have to offer.

BuildForce is a UK-wide alliance of employers, industry bodies and military charities, focused on encouraging and supporting veterans into construction industry careers. Their **mentorship programme** allows ex-military and construction mentors to show the mentee the route they have already successfully traveled. Mentors and mentees are carefully matched according to skillset, seniority and location.



The Civil Service Armed Forces Network brings together veterans, reservists and their family members from departments across the UK Civil Service. Its primary focus is on providing peer support and networking opportunities for veterans, reservists, partners, spouses and those who are bereaved. It also has the opportunity to raise ideas, recommendations and practical steps that the Civil Service can take as an employer to improve



the experience and opportunities available to those already within the workforce.

Greater Manchester Police has a variety of internal development and retention programmes that focus on making sure veterans feel valued and included. It also makes opportunities for becoming subject matter experts, progression and promotion available to veterans and the Armed Forces community members it employs.



“Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has a long history of employing military service leavers, veterans and reservists. We recognise and welcome the transferable skills, as well as specialist skills they bring which are hugely beneficial to policing. In addition, we know they have already demonstrated a desire to serve their country and we want to harness this loyalty and commitment to protect and safeguard the communities of Greater Manchester. The force has a very strong internal Armed Forces community and those joining our ranks are introduced and welcomed into it from their first day with us.”

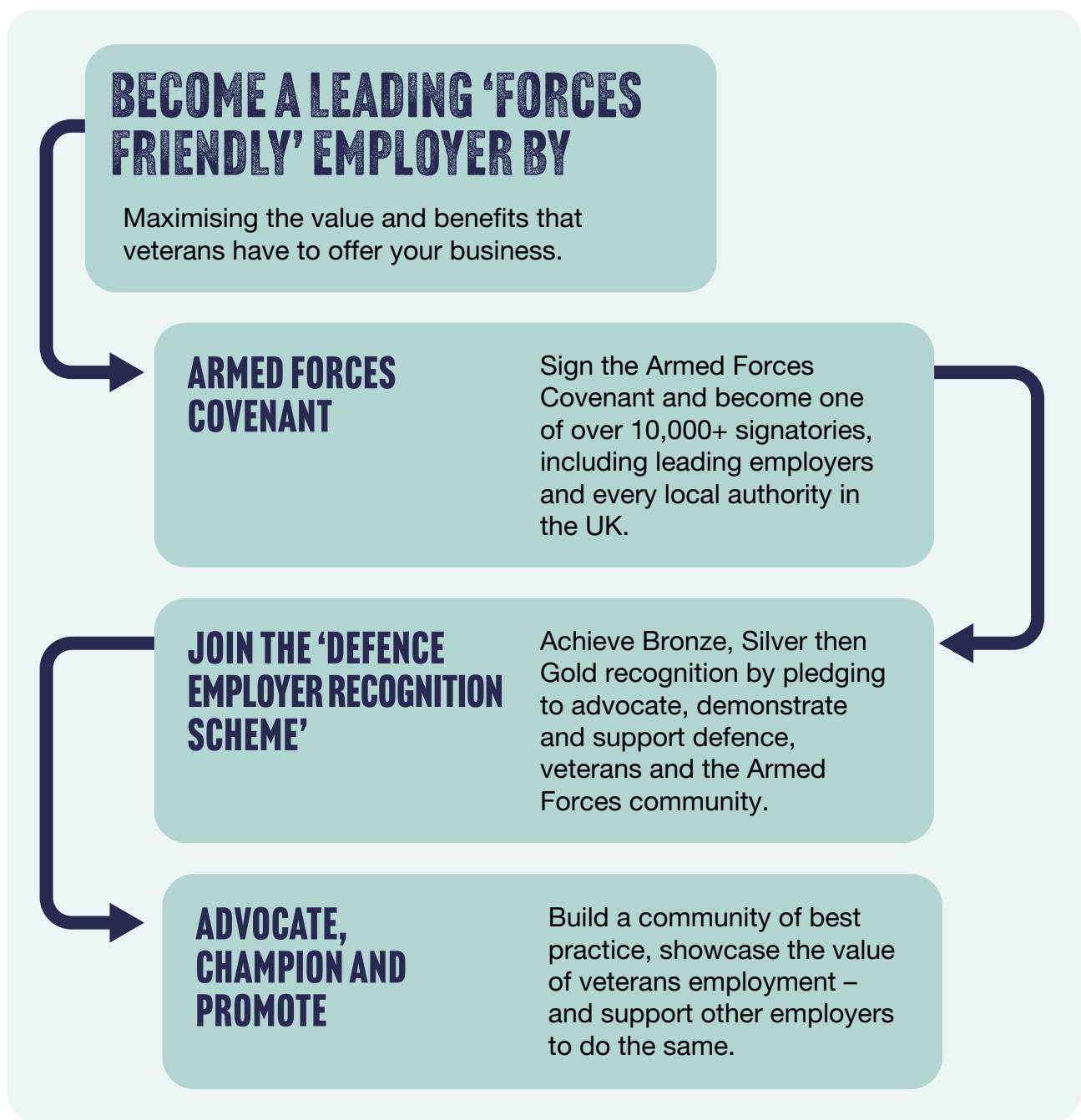


Chief Constable Stephen Watson, Greater Manchester Police

WHAT'S NEXT?

YOU'VE COVERED RECRUITMENT, RETENTION
AND DEVELOPMENT SO... WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that your business is benefitting from veterans and all they have to offer, you can secure your position as a leader in the UK veterans' employment space by following the steps below.

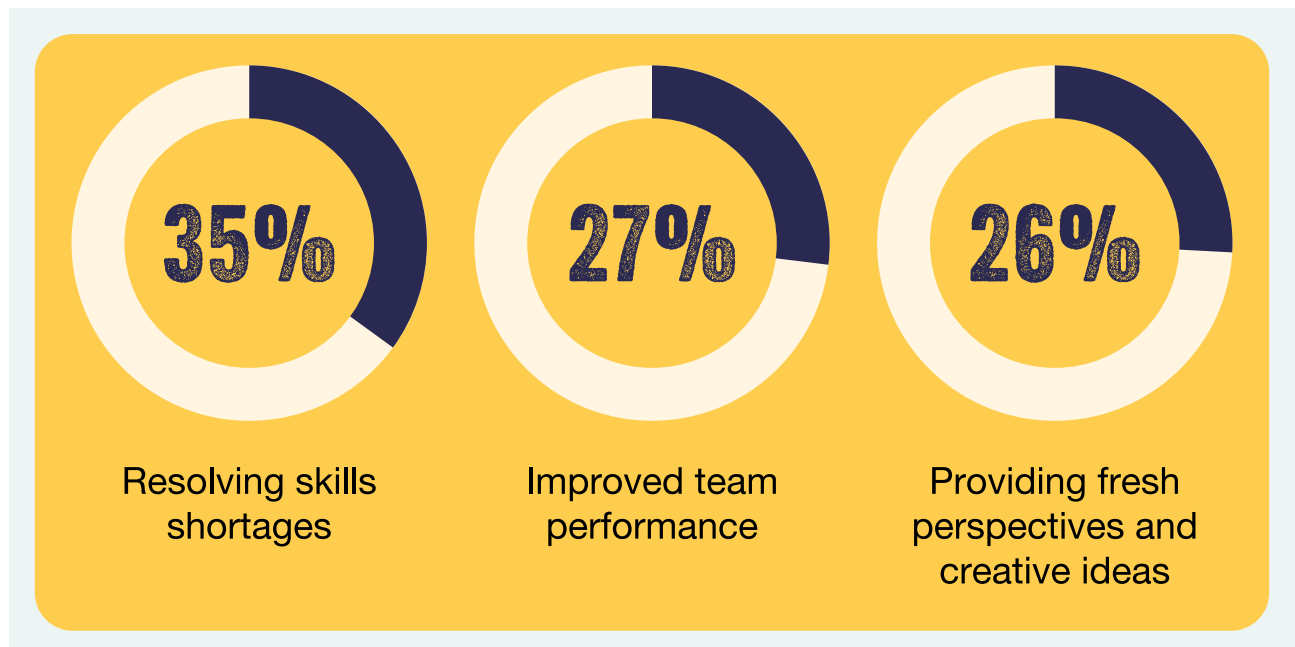
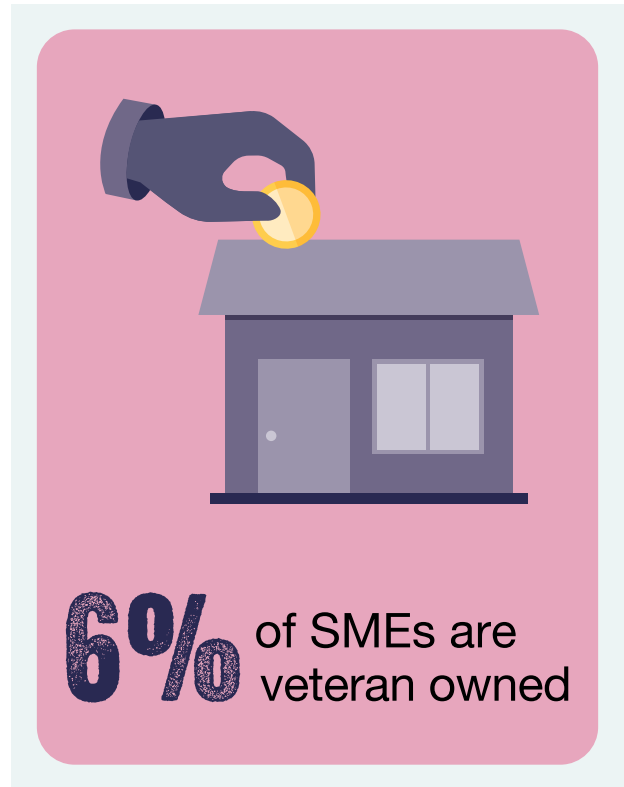


TIPS FOR SELF-EMPLOYED AND SMES

6% of SMEs are veteran owned, according to the Federation of Small Businesses, approximately.

The latest research from the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has found that the best reported benefits for SME employers who take on veterans, include:

- **resolving skills shortages (35%)**
- **improved team performance (27%)**
- **providing fresh perspectives and creative ideas (26%)³**



³ FSB, A Force for Business: Service Leavers and Small Business, 2019

As an SME there are things you can do beyond recruitment, such as being pro-active about making connections with veteran-owned businesses.

Collaboration and making the most of available support can help to make your business thrive, such as working with other SMEs in your area and connecting with key organisations such as **Chambers of Commerce, Local Enterprise and Employability Partnerships.**

Organisations like **X-Forces, Federation of Small Businesses** and **Royal British Legion**, can be of assistance to veterans, partners and spouses looking to take the first or next step in establishing their business, as can the dedicated Self-Employment Work Coaches offered by the **Department for Work and Pensions.**



Dandelion Cafe. Emma worked in Telecommunications in the Royal Air Force, leaving as a Senior Aircraftman before opening her own cafe coffee house.

Emma accessed a Start Up Loan of £6,000 through X-Forces Enterprise (XFE), which she used towards upgrading the décor, furniture and equipment as well as the illustrated branding and website.

XFE allocated Emma a personal Business Advisor who closely



supported her through the planning process and the 12 months post-launch, in a programme supported by the Royal British Legion.

RESOURCES

Armed Forces Champions – Department for Work & Pensions

Armed Forces Champions are spread across the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) JobCentre Plus network. Supporting veterans, service leavers, partners, spouses and serving personnel during their resettlement period. Combined with DWP's tailored support for employers to source candidates and create bespoke recruitment initiatives through the **Employer & Partnership team**, **Sector Based Work Academies** and more, this can present an attractive route of recruitment.

You can find out more online at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobcentre-plus-services-for-the-armed-forces-and-their-families/armed-forces-enhanced-access-to-jobcentre-plus-services-and-armed-forces-champions

www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-partnerships/national-partnership-teams

www.gov.uk/government/publications/sector-based-work-academies-employer-guide/sector-based-work-academies-employer-guide

Service Leavers Adjustment Passport

Is available to support veterans and service leavers who require adjustments, as part of the process of transitioning into civilian employment.

Find out more online about how the passport can help you to be a confident, supportive employer:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1170172/service-leavers-adjustment-passport.pdf

www.gov.uk/government/publications/service-leavers-adjustment-passport/service-leavers-adjustment-passport-guidance

The Veterans' News & Communications Hub

This showcases the continued value of the UK's highly skilled veteran community, including news, case studies and examples of best practice from UK employers who are benefitting from veterans in their workforce.

You can access the Hub at:

www.gov.uk/guidance/veterans-news-and-communications-hub

The Business Support Helpline

All businesses, including those **owned by or employing veterans** can access the Government's core business support services, information and guidance on starting up and running a business, as well as their statutory rights and obligations, on GOV.UK at www.gov.uk/browse/business.

The Business Support Helpline can be contacted by telephone on 0800 998 1098. Users can also speak to an adviser via webchat, or email: enquiries@businesssupporthelpline.org

10 Things to Know About Veterans

Provides helpful information to those supporting and working with veterans, available as a one-page summary and enhanced desk-guide.

You can access the products online at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-things-to-know-about-a-veteran

Career Transition Partnership

www.ctp.org.uk/employers

Defence Relationship Management

www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-relationship-management

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme/defence-employer-recognition-scheme

Forces Employment Charity

www.forcesemployment.org.uk/employers/promote-your-vacancy/

X-Forces Enterprise

x-forces.com

FSB – the Federation of Small Businesses

www.fsb.org.uk

Cobseo – the Confederation of Service Charities

www.cobseo.org.uk

RBLI's Lifeworks

www.wearelifeworks.org.uk

Department for Work & Pensions – Employer Services

secure.dwp.gov.uk/contact-employer-services/contact-form

Department for Business & Trade – Finance & Support

www.gov.uk/business-finance-support

NHS – Step into Health

www.militarystepintohealth.nhs.uk

Ministry of Justice – Advance into Justice

www.advance-into-justice.service.justice.gov.uk

Office for Veterans' Affairs

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-veterans-affairs

