



## **Meeting summary for Veterans Special Interest Group - Meeting Summary 4 February 2025**

### **Armed Forces Special Interest Group**

Mark Cameron, CEO of The 5% Club, and Tony Ellender, Fellow of The 5% Club and Royal Navy veteran, led a discussion about the potential for a special interest group within The 5% Club. The group is interested in working with cadets and has reservists among their employees. The idea of the veterans special interest group was introduced, and Tony explained the early thinking behind it.

### **Armed Forces Special Interest Group**

Tony Ellender, Fellow of The 5% Club introduced the Veterans Special Interest Group, a new initiative within The 5% Club. The group aims to enhance employment pathways, particularly for early leavers, unemployed veterans, children of serving personnel, and cadets. The group will conduct membership outreach, create tools and training programs, facilitate knowledge sharing, and leverage partnerships with organisations like the Career Transition Partnership and the Office for Veterans Affairs. The initial focus will be on the aforementioned groups, with the intention to expand later if appropriate. A virtual meeting will be held prior to Easter to agree on priorities and partners.

## **Supporting Underrepresented Groups in Job Market**

Tony and Mark Cameon, CEO, The 5% Club discussed The Club's initiative to support underrepresented groups in the job market, particularly spouses and ethnically diverse service leavers. There was a discussion about the lack of support for spouses and the need for more flexible work arrangements, as well as the underrepresentation of ethnically diverse individuals in the job market. Tony acknowledged these points and suggested that these issues could be discussed further in the initial meeting. The team also mentioned the possibility of collaborating with other companies through the Joining Forces group to avoid duplication of effort.

## **Supporting Armed Forces Covenant Sign-Ups**

The group discussed the potential for supporting organisations looking to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant. Tony suggested this could be a second-stage initiative, while emphasizing that primary advice should come from Defence Relationship Management. Mark felt that the Defence Relationship Management team is currently overwhelmed, which may affect their service quality. He suggests that the community of interest created by this group could provide advice on signing up to the Covenant and improving submissions for bronze, silver, or gold assessments.

## **Focus Group Benefits and Expansion**

There was further discussion on the benefits and next steps for joining a special focus group. One participant, a veteran of the Royal Navy and part of a veterans group, asked about the process and her place in the group. Mark explained that the group would be a spectrum of companies at different levels of maturity, and that those with more experience could provide advice and support to others. He also highlighted the benefits of being part of a community of practice and helping other employers, which could enhance their reaccreditation at Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels. Tony suggested targeting groups not currently targeted, such as cadets, and working with charity partners to make opportunities within The 5% Club more transparent. Mark agreed, noting that the cadet model needs to be rethought to appeal to digital natives.

## **The 5% Club Collaboration and Action Plan**

Mark Cameron discussed The 5% Club's involvement in a government discussion about the nation's youth and their preparedness for crises. He highlighted the potential for collaboration with various charities and funds to support schemes for young people and veterans. Participants expressed interest in early careers and the challenges of scaling their work experience program. Mark suggested that The 5% Club could help tap into available funds to create scalable schemes. Tony emphasized the collective power of The 5% Club members to address issues like early leavers transitioning into civilian life. The conversation ended with plans for a follow-up meeting to develop an action plan.

## **5% Club Follow-Up and Future Groups**

Companies interested in participating in the Special Interest Group should register their interest by emailing [helen.tanner@5percentclub.org.uk](mailto:helen.tanner@5percentclub.org.uk) indicating whether they are a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant. Deadline 21 February

Mark also mentioned the potential for future special interest groups, including one for SMEs and NHS.

