



HELP for
HEROES



IMPACT REPORT

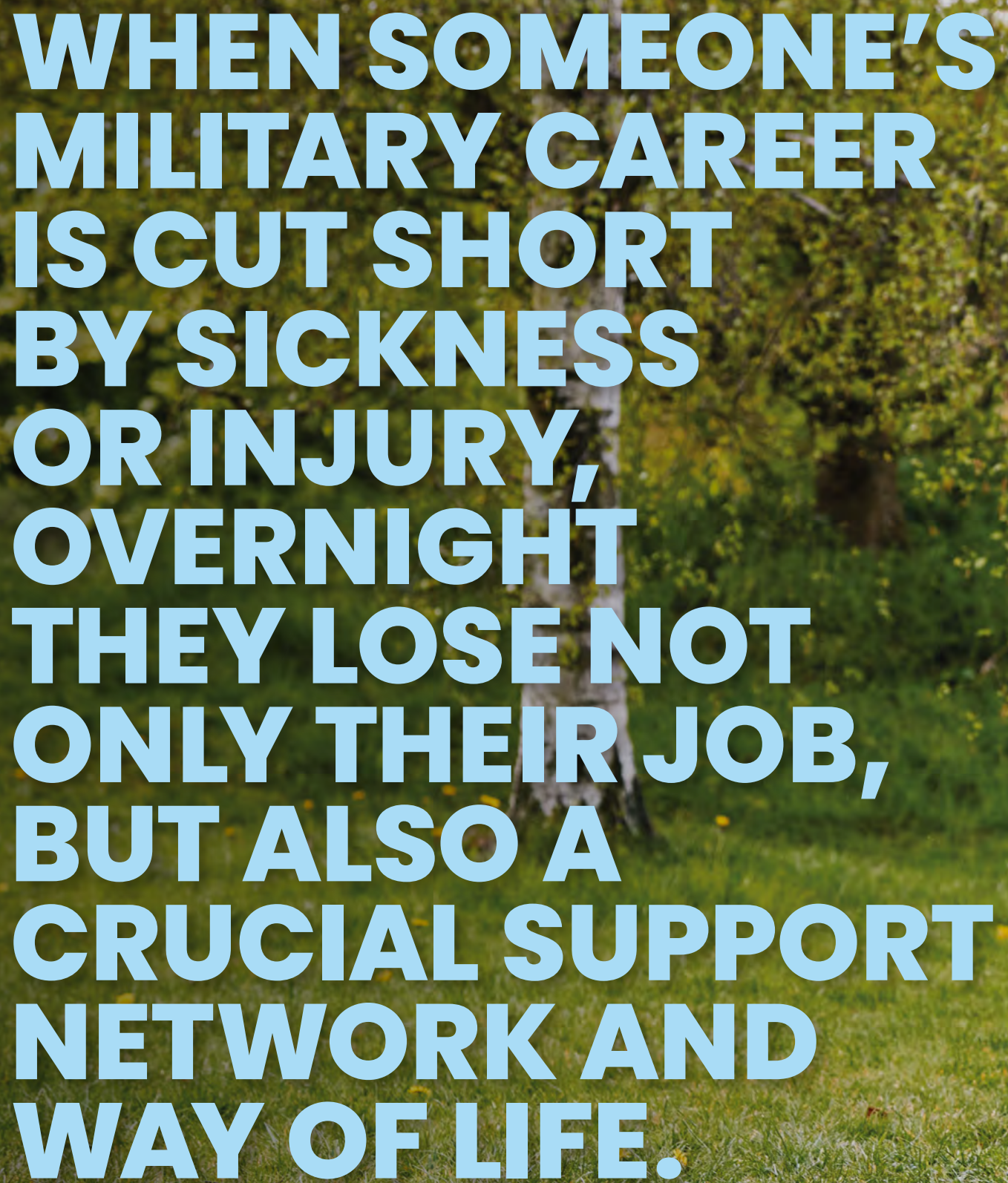
2020/21

**HELP for
HEROES**
SUPPORT FOR OUR WOUNDED



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**WHEN SOMEONE'S
MILITARY CAREER
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BY SICKNESS
OR INJURY,
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THEY LOSE NOT
ONLY THEIR JOB,
BUT ALSO A
CRUCIAL SUPPORT
NETWORK AND
WAY OF LIFE.**





FIGHTING FOR THOSE WHO FOUGHT FOR US

We are Help for Heroes, the UK's leading Armed Forces and veterans charity. Thanks to you, we are able to give veterans and their families one less battle to fight.

Veterans deserve to be treated fairly by the country they risked everything for. That's why we raise awareness of the injustices they face and demand that the Government and other decision makers do better by them.

We help veterans and their families recover from their physical and psychological wounds. We also help our nation's heroes with a range of welfare needs, including financial difficulties, homelessness, loneliness, isolation, and ensuring that disabled veterans can get into and around their home.

Many veterans and families have found the pandemic really hard. This is a community with high levels of mental health needs, and isolation was a big problem even before lockdowns and shielding.

In 2020/21, we accelerated our plans to reshape our recovery services to support veterans and their families in their homes and communities around the UK.

Despite many tough challenges, thanks to you, our fundraisers, donors and partners we provided uninterrupted support to 3,289 people during a difficult year. However, thousands of veterans and their families are still in dire need. We hope this report inspires you to help us continue providing veterans with the support they deserve.

73%

of veterans with health conditions live with long-term pain

67%

struggle to make meaningful connections in society

“I love Help for Heroes because it has given me my life back, and that means my wife has her husband back and my kids have their Dad back.”

Greg, veteran

ASH'S STORY

Working in partnership with veterans and families, we provide holistic and joined-up support covering a wide range of issues.

“Nobody has ever been able to help with all my complex physical and mental health conditions like this. Help for Heroes has got me through one of the worst times in my life.”

Ash was in the RAF for 15 years, and served in the First Gulf War, Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia. He suffered two bad head injuries, and he developed epilepsy and post-traumatic stress disorder from his time in the military. His world then came “tumbling down” when he was diagnosed with incurable blood cancer.

“For over a decade I was being pushed from pillar to post with my clinical and welfare needs. No-one could put everything together or imagine what living with all those conditions was like.

“With Janine, my Veterans’ Clinical Advisor from Help for Heroes, there was finally someone who completely understood my situation, spoke my language, and was helping.”

Janine, and Ash’s Case Manager Mini, arranged for him to get the support he needed.

“Help for Heroes moving from Recovery Centres to being out in the community is just what my family and I needed. Janine came to see me, and during that first meeting I felt positive for the first time in years.

“I’ve worked with many mental health professionals, but I have never engaged with any of them like I have with Rich from Hidden Wounds. For the first time ever, I look forward to my mental health sessions.

“When I’m really struggling with my mental health, it’s like there’s this fog. I’m extremely clinically vulnerable to Covid and I’ve been shielding for two years. The isolation and worry have been tough, and

the fog was descending again. Finally understanding my mental health is like having a light to show me a path through the fog.”

Ash said that the Help for Heroes Occupational Therapist Kathryn has been “another star”.

“Within a week of her visit, she had motivated the local council to revisit me. Within a few days of that visit, I had a medical bed and reclining chair delivered. After another visit, plans were drawn up to adapt my home for wheelchair access, a wet room and accessible toilet.

“I’ve been working through the Recovery College Art of Sleep course. I’ve had a few lightbulb moments and have gained a much better understanding of my nocturnal seizures and post-traumatic stress disorder.

“There isn’t an organisation that covers all the things that Help for Heroes covers. I am now in such a better place to make the most of the time I have left.”



TAKING VITAL RECOVERY SERVICES TO OUR HEROES

How you helped us support veterans in 2020/21

Thanks to you – our wonderful supporters, partners, fundraisers and volunteers – we delivered life-changing support and wellbeing activities to veterans and families across the UK, despite the challenges of Covid-19.

Our aims for Recovery in 2020/21

To provide world class support to veterans and their families

We set out to deliver a simplified, joined-up and high-quality recovery service that is affordable, scalable and remains relevant and responsive to those we serve.

Our teams delivered sporting, leisure, social, and music activities in person around the UK, as Covid regulations allowed. This included open water swimming, choir sessions, family days, kayaking, wheelchair rugby, model making and coffee mornings. It can be very beneficial to veterans and families, at risk of loneliness and isolation, to be with others who have had similar experiences. Sport, exercise and social interaction can often kickstart veterans' recovery journey.

The Charity's Clinical and Medical Services Team provided rehabilitation in homes and communities. The team supports veterans and their loved ones with their physical recovery.

42% of people treated by this team had an improvement in their ability to walk – progressing from 'severe problems walking' or 'unable to walk' to 'moderate' or 'better'.

We provided veterans with vital online contact and support. Whether it was a chat about their physical or mental health, singing with the Choir, taking part in an online photography club, or a creative writing class, many veterans

described our online services and support as their lifeline during lockdown.

6 new online Recovery College courses were delivered in 2020/21. This took the total number of courses available to 14. Veterans with lived experience co-designed the courses to help others in a similar situation gain the life skills and confidence to help them on their recovery journey.

Our Hidden Wounds team responded to increasing complexity in mental health problems among veterans and families. Lockdowns and shielding added to problems of isolation, loneliness and anxiety. The emergency withdrawal from Afghanistan was distressing for many veterans.

£414,000 in Grants was given to veterans and families in need. Our Grants team typically funds housing adaptations, adaptive equipment and welfare needs to help veterans with their recovery. Throughout lockdown they also met requests for emergency food baskets for veterans who were shielding, in poverty or unable to work.

“No-one can truly understand me like another veteran. When I've spent time with other ex-service personnel, I have a sense of completeness.”

Derek, veteran

“Sport has brought me back to life. I was in a very dark place and Help for Heroes reignited that fire in my belly.” Clare, veteran

21 Afghan interpreters who came to the UK with their family in desperate need were supported. We have been working with people in this way since 2016, but the need came into the spotlight with the emergency evacuation from Afghanistan in the summer of 2021. We’re working with partner organisations to offer support to others in a similar situation.

15 veterans who were injured in service took part in a one-year sports coaching development programme, in partnership with UK Coaching. Pending evaluation of impact and with the necessary funding, we would like to extend this opportunity to a greater number of people.

We launched a two-year programme to tackle loneliness and isolation among the veteran community in north and mid Wales.

Geographical remoteness adds another dimension on top of physical injuries, poor health, and the pandemic. Lessons from this work will be applied elsewhere. This work was funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.



“The adaptations to my house would not have happened without my Help for Heroes occupational therapist Alex. I wouldn’t have been able to sort it out.”

Steve, veteran

HELP FOR HEROES SUPPORT AND ACTIVITIES IN 2020/21 IN NUMBERS

3,289

people supported by Help for Heroes in 2020/21

1,218

people supported by our Clinical and Medical Services team

124

people took part in Recovery College courses

1,143

people were helped by our specialist mental health service for veterans, Hidden Wounds

160

people were helped by our occupational therapists to find solutions to challenges caused by an illness or injury stopping them from doing everyday tasks

203

online Choir sessions, six face-to-face rehearsals and one studio recording in 2020/21

These statistics are from our financial year 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021.

“My Hidden Wounds counsellor has made me feel like there is light at the end of the tunnel.”

Helen, wife of a veteran

1,100

people supported by a case manager

8,200

website views for our Recovery College guides

549

referrals for community rehabilitation from our Clinical Medical Services team

702

online Sport, Activity and Fellowship events were delivered

199

face-to-face Sport, Activity and Fellowship events were delivered in communities around the UK, as Covid regulations allowed

234

parliamentary activities we were involved in: briefing politicians, committee hearings, and mentions parliament

MICHAEL'S STORY

At the age of 21, Michael's life was changed forever when he was badly injured in Afghanistan. With your help, we can provide him with the best possible life-long support.

“Thanks to Help for Heroes I have independence and I can drive my family around.”

Michael lost both legs above the knee when he was hit by an improvised explosive device on his second tour of Afghanistan with the British Army in July 2011. The blast also badly damaged his abdomen and hands.

Michael, now 33, is one of 21 veterans classed as Very Seriously Injured who were supported by the Charity in 2020/21. Thanks to advances in medicine, people have survived horrific injuries they would have died from 10 years earlier.

This is a huge cause for celebration. However, it also means these young veterans will need intensive and expensive rehabilitation and care for the rest of their lives.

“Thanks to Help for Heroes, I can stay independent and fit and I have the right equipment, like a bath seat, which is important as having the wrong one can be degrading. Help for Heroes has listened to me, and they've been the only organisation to have stuck by me.”

Michael lives with his Mum, Dad and two children.

He had to shield for large periods of the pandemic but was able to exercise regularly thanks to adapted gym equipment we funded. His good level of fitness means he can get from his wheelchair to his chair or bed on his own.

One of our nursing team Phil, pictured behind Michael, travels with him on 600-mile round trips from his home in the North East to the War Injuries Clinic in Salisbury, for essential specialist treatment.

The team help Michael develop the confidence and skills to take an active part in his long-term recovery.

They also provide specialist mobility equipment to give him independence in his home and in the community. This equipment, which needs to be replaced regularly due to his changing needs, could not be provided fully by the NHS.

After his children, Michael's biggest passion is online gaming. That's why the nursing team has worked hard to help him improve the use of his hands.

Michael recently organised an online event which raised £1,000 for Help for Heroes.

“I used to be socially isolated but now I have this massive friendship group who I spend hours with, it just happens to be online.

“Gaming has saved me. When I'm gaming I'm not thinking about what's going on with my life. It makes me talk to people – something I didn't used do outside of my family.”



CHAMPIONING THE WOUNDED

We lobby governments, local councils, health boards and other statutory bodies to demand that people who risked everything for their country get a fair deal in return.

What we set out to achieve in 2020/21

To be thought leaders driving positive change

We wanted to use our voice to be bold and strong in championing the needs of the wounded and their families in policy and society, to accelerate change and give them the future they deserve.

- We campaigned to further enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in Law through the Armed Forces Bill. We continue to push for the Covenant to cover more areas affecting veterans' lives, and for it to have the power to hold the UK Government to account.
- We submitted a business case to HM Treasury and the Office for Veterans' Affairs outlining how and why we think the Veterans Mobility Fund (VMF) should be continued. The VMF was a five-year, £3 million fund using proceeds from LIBOR rate fixing fines that Help for Heroes, and other charities, used to fund specialist equipment for veterans with serious physical injuries.
- We launched a campaign called Still Our Heroes to remind the nation that veterans who served in Afghanistan, and in other conflicts, showed remarkable bravery. We also sent responsible reporting guidelines out to the UK media urging caution and care in their reporting, as we knew that some of the footage and commentary was distressing for UK veterans.

David is one of the veterans who campaigns with us. His work to highlight injustices, includes talking to senior politicians at Westminster and Holyrood, and on national politics television shows.

"The Armed Forces Covenant has been patchy in implementation. It is important that Help for Heroes has raised public awareness and encouraged organisations to honour it.

"If Government and society supported veterans properly, there wouldn't be a need for Help for Heroes. But that isn't happening, so that need for both the practical support and to demand the necessary changes is very real."

HITTING THE HEADLINES

Help for Heroes was mentioned 4,393 times in the UK national, regional and trade press in 2020/21. This included stories about our response to the withdrawal from Afghanistan and our campaigning for better support for veterans who have been medically discharged.

We are proud to work collaboratively with partner organisations as much as possible in our bid to provide veterans with the best possible support services and to campaign on their behalf.

We have 1.75 million followers on the social media channels Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn.

FUNDING THE CAUSE

What we set out to achieve in 2020/21

We aimed to raise at least £17.3 million by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our fundraising as we develop more sustainable sources of income for the future.

Thanks to you, our amazing donors, fundraisers, partners and grant funders, we raised £18.5 million in 2020/21.

This was even more remarkable given that the majority of planned face-to-face fundraising events were cancelled or postponed during the year because of the pandemic.

We launched an urgent appeal in October 2020 and the UK public's heartfelt response raised more than £150,000.

Gifts left in people's Wills made up more than half of our income. Income from our Regular Giving funding stream remained stable through the year.

Reacting to the changing recovery needs of veterans and their families, we secured various grants restricted to specific projects. This includes a grant from NHS England to support our Hidden Wounds Service to help veterans with their mental health. We also received significant multi-year grants from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, including a two-year grant of £300,000 to develop a suicide awareness and prevention training programme, which will empower families and peers to help save the lives of veterans at risk of suicide.

Support from our commercial partners was invaluable during a difficult year. We are truly humbled, inspired and grateful for the magnificent fundraising efforts of all our partners, which makes a real difference to the lives of wounded veterans and their families.

GROUP INCOME

Donations and grants
£5.6 million

Legacies
£9.5 million

Trading
£2.5 million

Challenges & Events
£0.6 million

Investments
£0.3 million

Total Group Income
£18.5 million

Total Group Expenditure
£36.3 million

CHARITY EXPENDITURE

Recovery services and campaigns **80%**

Fundraising **10%**

Charity infrastructure **10%**

FOR EVERY £1 WE SPEND ON FUNDRAISING, WE RAISE £3.50 FOR VETERANS.

THANK YOU

We receive very little Government money and rely on you for more than 92 per cent of our income. Without this kind support, we could not provide life-changing and life-saving support to veterans and their families. Thank you to everyone who has donated, raised funds, partnered with us, and supported us in any way.

However, our work is far from finished. We need to be here for all ill and injured veterans.

In 2020/21, a total of 1,124 people were medically discharged from the Armed Forces. But the problem is greater than that because thousands of veterans come to us with physical and mental health problems who have not been through the medical discharge process. On top of that there are thousands of veterans already accessing our services who will need ongoing support, some for the rest of their lives. There will also be those who need support in the future, because of injuries resulting from training, and humanitarian and disaster relief work.

Without your help, there would be massive gaps in the support veterans and their families desperately need. Thank you for being there for our nation's heroes and their families.







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helpforheroes.org.uk
pressoffice@helpforheroes.org.uk
0300 303 9888

 /HelpforHeroesOfficial  @HelpforHeroes
 @HelpforHeroes  HelpforHeroesTV



Published by Help for Heroes, a charity registered in England and Wales (1120920) and Scotland (SC044984), and limited company registered in England (6363256).

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Help for Heroes, 14 Parkers Close, Downton Business Centre, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 3RB