

A man with prosthetic arms and legs is sitting on a chair. He is wearing a red hoodie with a "Bury Boccia" logo on the chest and a dark cap with a "WILD GEAR" logo. He is looking directly at the camera. The background is a green wall and a paved area.

# HELP for HEROES

## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS IMPACT REPORT

2023–2024

A photograph of a group of people, including a man with a beard and a woman, embracing each other in a supportive hug. The image is overlaid with a dark blue tint. The text 'HELP FOR HEROES' is in white, and 'FIGHTING FOR THE PEACE VETERANS DESERVE.' is in light blue.

# HELP FOR HEROES FIGHTING FOR THE PEACE VETERANS DESERVE.

Cover image: British Army Veteran Lamin lost both his legs and an arm when he was caught in a bomb blast on a tour of Afghanistan. He says that sport he's found through Help for Heroes has given him 'a new sense of freedom'. Read his story on page 18.

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# MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



“  
**We have big ambitions.  
We want to be here for  
all veterans who need  
help with their daily  
challenges, for as long  
as they need us.**”

Thanks to your kindness, we supported 5,229 people from the Armed Forces community in 2023/24. That's more people than ever before in a 12-month period, and a 31 per cent increase on last year.

Reaching such a milestone is bittersweet.

On the one hand, I'm delighted by the improvements we've made which makes it easier for people to access our support. And I'm incredibly proud to work alongside colleagues, volunteers and partners who pour their energy into helping veterans and their loved ones.

But this continued increase in demand for support tells us that many veterans are still fighting for the peace they deserve.

They tell us it can be relentless. Daily battles of pain, mental trauma, disability, poverty, loneliness and inaccessible homes.

Life after a career in the Armed Forces can be tough. Particularly for those who leave through ill health or injury. Some are left feeling let down by the country they risked everything for.

Our teams understand the challenges veterans face, and are ready, willing and able to help.

As more people come forward for support, we're making a difference. Helping people walk, talk and stand tall once again.

Empowering and supporting people to feed their families and heat their homes. Enabling people to manage mental trauma that's put their lives on hold.

All this is thanks to you.

Veterans live across the UK, and we work across all four nations. In the past year we've reached deeper into more neighbourhoods and communities than ever before.

While we're proud to be smashing records and breaking new ground, we can't let up for one moment, because thousands more out there still need us.

Veterans are a sizable community. Two million people in the UK served in the military. There are their families, too. These are highly skilled, trained and capable people. They have much to give – but some of them need an extra bit of support to fulfil their potential.

We can provide care, support, medical pathways and education to help people make a success of life after they've hung up their uniform.

We have big ambitions. We want to be here for all veterans who need help with their daily challenges, for as long as they need us.

This will only be possible with your continued support. Thank you for all you've done to help veterans and their families. Please don't let up; they need you today more than ever.



**James Needham**  
Chief Executive Officer



# MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

I want to thank everyone within the Help for Heroes family for playing their part in a busy and successful year.

The plan is working.

This Charity continues to respond to a growing need for our support services, and it provides innovative, life-changing support carefully tailored to each individual's needs.

The responsibility is on us now to reach more people who need our help while maintaining that personalised approach. I am confident that, with continued hard work, dedication and teamwork, we can rise to the challenge.

By changing the way we do things and venturing out to meet veterans, in their homes and communities across the UK, as well as online, we're more accessible than ever.

The need is there. Thousands of veterans are finding life alarmingly tough on a daily basis. Remember, this is a group of people unaccustomed to asking for help. When they do come forward for help, trust me when I say they need it.

I would also like to thank the people who are rolling up their sleeves and delivering the support – getting out and about across the UK to change lives.

And I want to thank those of you who are generous with your time, money and energy to fundraise, donate, volunteer and support us. You're changing lives.

Being able to live well after military service shouldn't be a big ask. It's what people have earned, it's what people deserve. But as a nation, we're a long way off it being the norm.

For those who had to leave the military because of injury or illness life can be unbearably tough, intolerable at times. This is not something we're prepared to accept. We'll be doubling down on our mission to improve the process for people who suddenly, through no fault of their own, find themselves out of the career and way of life that meant everything to them.

We'll be working with decision makers to improve the medical discharge process. This is one of the big themes we see on a regular basis and so it's something we will continue to raise with decision makers and those with influence up and down this land.

This mission is far from over and we couldn't do any of it without you, our supporters; so a massive thank you for all you do to change the lives of our veterans and their families. You are making a real difference.



**Sir Nigel Boardman**  
Chair of Trustees



“  
**Being able to live well after military service shouldn't be a big ask. It's what people have earned, it's what people deserve.**”

A man in a military uniform is seated in a chair, looking out a window at night. The room is dimly lit, with a lamp visible on the left and a desk with a laptop on the right. The man is wearing a dark uniform with visible insignia. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

# OUR VISION

A society where everyone  
in the Armed Forces community  
lives well after military service.

# OUR STRATEGY

At Help for Heroes, we believe all members of the Armed Forces community should live well after service. There are many challenges people face after a career in the military has ended. Through our Live Well 2032 Strategy, we are striving to ensure that the Armed Forces community is valued, supported and recognised. Between now and 2032, we will focus on four main outcomes.

## OUR OUTCOMES



### ACCESS TO SUPPORT

Making sure that individuals and their families have access to the care and support they need.



### ADAPTING AND MANAGING

Helping veterans, their families and everyone we support, manage the impact of any condition, injury, or illness they may have.



### VALUED AND RECOGNISED

Striving to make sure that those who have served in the military are valued, understood, and recognised.



### EQUIPPED FOR LIFE AFTER SERVICE

Working to ensure that individuals and their families can live well after service. So that people feel they belong and can manage their wellbeing.

2023/24 has proven to be a successful second year in our 10-year strategy. The impact our teams have had, in terms of each of these four outcomes, is indicated throughout this report using the icons listed above.

# OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

How we supported our Armed Forces community in 2023/24

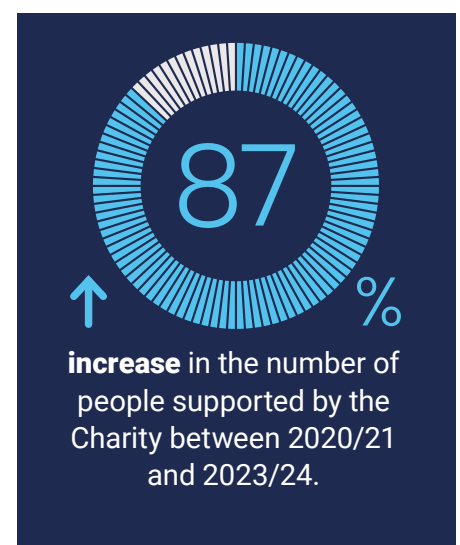


**5,229**

people supported, a  
**31 per cent increase**  
on the year before.

**1,201**

people with complex and serious challenges were supported by Help for Heroes case managers who coordinate the care a veteran or family receives. Our case managers are experts in welfare issues.



**1,864**

people were supported by our Veterans' Clinical Services team, an **increase of 24 per cent** on the year before.

**1,512**

people were supported by our Hidden Wounds mental health team, an **increase of 12 per cent** on the year before.





# 940

people were supported by our Grants Team, an **increase of 66 per cent** on the year before.

# £1.5M

was awarded in grants, including through the Veterans' Mobility Fund. This allows us to help veterans with the cost of medical equipment, home modifications and access to care and therapy.

# 227

new referrals for our services in Northern Ireland, which was a **53 per cent increase** on the number of new referrals the year before.

# 1,060

calls to the helpline between June and October 2024.



# 1,103

people took part in our sporting and social activities, **up 41 per cent** on the year before.

# 604

people were supported by our Recovery College; this was **up 20 per cent** on the year before.

We've seen a **154 per cent increase** in the number of people supported by the Recovery College between 2020/21 and 2023/24.





# PROVIDING SPECIALIST HEALTHCARE FOR VETERANS NATIONWIDE



## Our network of nurses and occupational therapists provide life-changing support for veterans within their communities

Our Veterans' Clinical Services team supported a total of 1,864 people in 2023/24.

Our nurses and occupational therapists provide life-changing physical healthcare support to veterans, within their communities, nationwide.

The team has seen a 53 per cent increase in the total number of people supported between 2020/21 to 2023/24.

We support any veteran, regardless of how they became ill or injured.

Using our Coaching for Health approach, we help veterans take control of their healthcare journey. By helping people understand their condition and treatment options, we give people the knowledge and skills to have the right conversation with healthcare professionals. Ultimately, we're helping people to wait well and live well with their injuries and illnesses.

We're seeing more complex healthcare needs among those we support than ever before. According to the Ministry of Defence's 2024 data, five people are medically discharged from the Armed Forces every day and we are working hard to support their transition from military service as they navigate the civilian healthcare system.

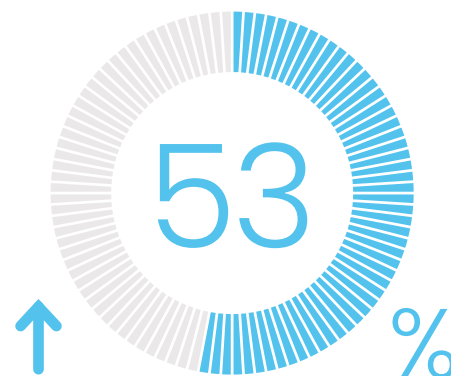
The clinical team works in partnership with the NHS and other Third Sector organisations to provide integrated support.

For example, we have recruited two Help for Heroes nurses who are embedded within Salisbury District Hospital and The James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough; two areas with high density veteran populations.

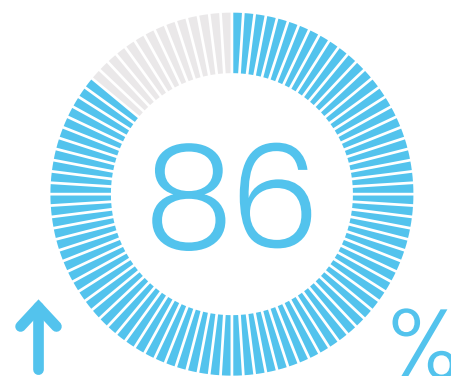
These nurses will oversee and coordinate services and meet the information and support needs of veterans and their families during their stay in hospital. They'll also support NHS Trusts seeking Veteran Awareness accreditation and visit veterans in their community.

In 2023/24, 86 per cent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "due to the support of the Help for Heroes clinical and medical team, I am better able to manage my medical condition" (n=102).

(Data taken from Power Bi: Help for Heroes Customer Service Satisfaction Survey)



The team has seen a 53% increase in the total number of people supported between 2020/21 to 2023/24

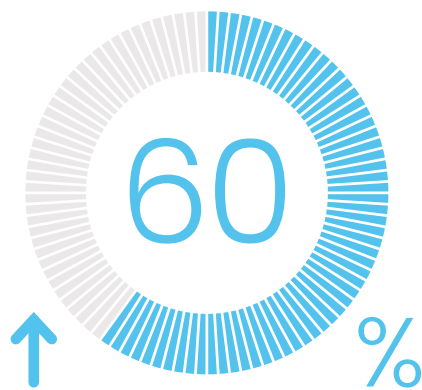


86% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Due to the support of the Help for Heroes clinical team, I am better able to manage my condition."

“Five people are medically discharged from the Armed Forces every day and we are working hard to support their transition from military service.”

Carol, Head of Clinical and Managed Support

# MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE



In 2023/24, the team supported 60 per cent more people than in 2020/21.



## Our bespoke mental health service for the Armed Forces community, Hidden Wounds, helped 1,512 people in a busy and successful year.

The team supported 14 per cent more people compared to the year before.

And it was a 60 per cent increase compared to 2020/21.

Across the charity, this uplift in support has been made possible by growing our capacity, increased marketing, and improving the process in which people can ask for our help and are referred to our services.

The service provides counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and tailored support according to need. It can help with a range of conditions and situations, including anxiety, depression, anger, relationship breakdown, alcohol dependency, grief and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Following an interim review, the service maintained its accreditation from the Quality Network for Veterans' Mental Health Services, which is the sector's kitemark, awarded by the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

All team members undertook training in Compassion Focused Therapy, a form of CBT, to help people manage pain better, as there is a strong link between physical pain and poor mental health among people who seek the team's support.

Recruitment into the team has allowed for more high intensity therapies and psychological treatments in response to an increase in the complexity and severity of conditions people are presenting with.

The team had an article published on the front page and centre spread of 'CBT Today', the official publication of the British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapists (BABCP). This is the governing body of all CBT based professions, with a membership of over 60,000 individuals.

We have designed mental health training around the strengths and vulnerabilities that combat training and service may bring and delivered these sessions to NHS colleagues and corporate partners such as Tesco and Network Rail, organisations with high populations of veteran employees.

“

**I was struggling to support my veteran partner, work full-time, care for my family, and look after myself following a bereavement. Counselling with Hidden Wounds has helped me find a better balance and overcome my anxiety and low mood.** ”

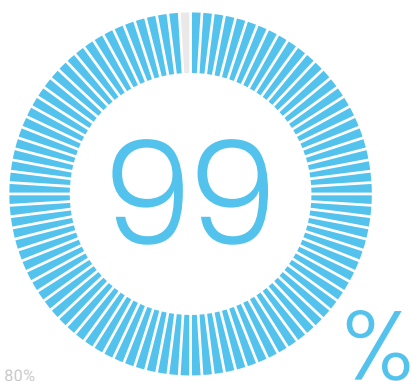
Veteran testimonial





### Question 1

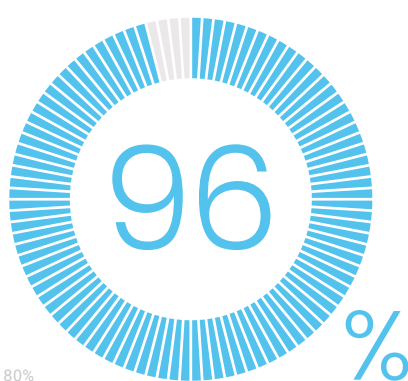
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? **I trust the advice or support I was offered.**



**Answered 'strongly agree or agree'.**

### Question 2

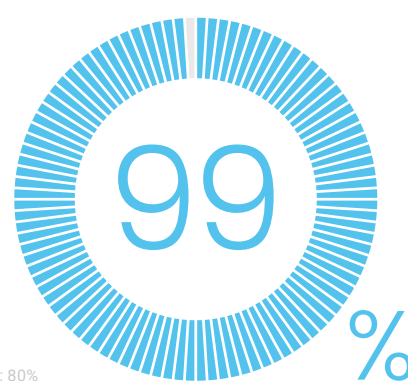
How likely are you to recommend the service to friends and family if they needed similar support?



**Answered 'Extremely likely or likely'.**

### Question 3

Overall, how was your experience of the service?



**Rated their experience as 'very good or good'.**

# SUPPORTING VETERANS WITH THE COST OF LIVING



In total we provided

# 1,172

grants worth

# £1 MILLION

**Last year we awarded a record amount of financial grants to help veterans with the cost of medical equipment, home modifications and access to care and therapy.**

In total we provided 1,172 grants worth £1,007,000.

Veterans told us they were having to choose between heating their homes and buying food. Obviously we couldn't allow this to happen and we allocated £75,400 through our cost-of-living 'Food and Energy' grants, to help alleviate the disproportionate effect of rising prices on disabled people.

We continued our Winter Fuel grant to provide financial support for veterans classed as seriously injured and very seriously injured.

This meets the additional costs their condition leads to; such as heating their homes and charging essential electrical medical equipment.

Grants were awarded for items such as wheelchairs, riser recliners, mobility scooters, specialist hearing aids not available on the NHS, essential white and brown goods, daily living aids, clinical items, gym memberships and travel costs to medical appointments or operations.

# ONE CALL AWAY: SUPPORT WHEN IT MATTERS



# 1,060

calls to the helpline  
between June and the  
end of September, 2024

**We launched a helpline last year so we can answer calls from veterans and family members who need our support. This has improved accessibility for those who need us.**

People in need of support can now talk to one of the six helpline staff, who all have an understanding of how Help for Heroes can help.

The helpline colleagues can signpost within Help for Heroes or to a partner organisation sooner, if someone else is better placed to support a caller.

There were a total of 1,060 calls to the helpline between June and the end of September, 2024. In September, 46 per cent of the calls taken resulted in one of our 'get help' forms being completed.

# RESTORING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH MOBILITY SUPPORT

A total of  
**£457,000**  
was awarded to  
**73 VETERANS**

**In March 2024, we began to distribute grants through the Veterans' Mobility Fund (VMF).**

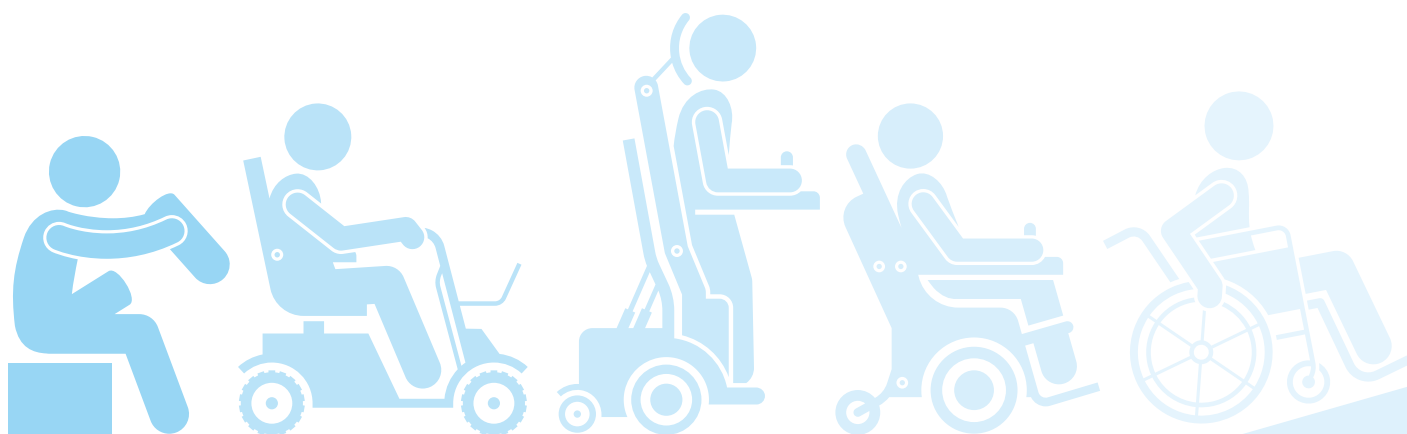
The Office for Veterans' Affairs funding provides grants to help improve physical mobility for veterans with injuries from service.

Help for Heroes and our partner charity Blesma were successful in a joint bid to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to administer the five-year £2.5 million fund. The money comes from the Office for Veterans' Affairs ministerial department.

The fund was brought back after we ran a strong campaign for it to be reinstated.

In its first seven months, a total of £457,000 was awarded to 73 veterans.

If a veteran applies for this funding and is unsuccessful because of the very specific criteria, we help them look for alternative sources of funding, including from Help for Heroes and other charities in the sector.



## Equipment approved under VMF includes:

Scooters, sports equipment, ramps, prosthetics, power wheelchairs, wheelchair power add ons, mobility aids (i.e. riser recliner), manual wheelchair with and without power add ons, car adaptations and ankle-foot orthotics.

“

**Wow, what can I say apart from thank you so, so, so much. It will improve my life so much and make me able to go off road with my kids and watch them play on their bikes and motorbike. Sincerely, thank you. ”**

Veteran testimonial

# HELPING VETERANS HELP THEMSELVES

**A British Army veteran, whose life was 'destroyed' when he broke his back at work, said support from one of our case managers has given him 'the impetus to start helping himself again'.**

Nick served for 14 years in the Army, during which time he completed two tours of Northern Ireland.

Following his time in the Army, Nick worked as an airport security officer. Things were going well and Nick was progressing with his career, until an incident at work - a fall over a bag a colleague left on the floor - caused him to break his back in four places and fracture his pelvis; and his world fell apart.

Nick was getting no support from his workplace or trade union. His physical and mental health became so poor, he was feeling suicidal.

"The accident has touched, or destroyed, every area of my life," Nick said. "My concentration, sleep, home life, private life, social life, financial life. I spend a lot of time in bed - probably 18 hours a day - because of the pain.

"I haven't walked my dog since last year, because I can't. The pain is so bad I don't want to wake up.

"But, thankfully, I have a Help for Heroes case manager, called Naomi, who is like a guardian angel. She is so helpful. She really has changed my life for the better in so many ways, and now I want to start doing things for myself again.

"She has helped me claim benefits from the Department for Work and Pensions, by helping me complete the forms."

Nick is now rightfully claiming Universal Credit, Personal Injuries Payments and Industrial Injuries benefits.

"I couldn't have done it on my own. There were so many forms to fill in. I'd never done it before, and I didn't know where to start.

"I was the only earner in the house. So Naomi has taken the stress and anxiety of finance away and I can concentrate on my health again."

“

**I was the only earner in the house. So Naomi has taken the stress and anxiety of finance away and I can concentrate on my health again. ”**



Nick has faced legal battles with his former workplace. He's also faced battles with his union to make sure he gets the support he's entitled to.

But he hasn't faced those battles alone.

Thanks to Naomi's support, his former workplace has accepted liability for the accident and he's in line for financial compensation, something which is important as he is unlikely to be able to work again.

"Naomi helped me think of things to ask my solicitor to do with the personal injury. She has been invaluable. She's read back statements I've written and advised me on them. She's been instrumental in going through that process."

Naomi also liaised with the local council to get Nick an adaptive bed and chair for his medical needs.

"I also have support from the charity's Veterans' Clinical Services team.

"In just a few months, thanks to the help of my veterans' clinical adviser, Fletch, I can talk so much better, and my thought

process is much clearer. He helped me look into alternative treatments, so that I could mitigate the side effects of some of the stronger drugs and manage my pain in other ways.

"I've had support from Sharon, from the charity's Hidden Wounds mental health team. It's good to have someone from outside of my immediate bubble to talk to. Because of the drugs and the pain, I have become reclusive.

"Naomi, Sharon, and Fletch are worth their weight in gold. With the help they give, and for being there and listening; and if a problem should arise, with the advice they give too. It's been very humbling."





# PERSONALISED SUPPORT FOR COMPLEX NEEDS



**If someone has complex – or several – needs, they'll be assigned a Help for Heroes case manager.**

These colleagues are experts in veterans' welfare issues, who oversee, coordinate and monitor all the strands of an individual's support.

Their aim is to inspire and help veterans and their families to live sustainably within their own communities; ensuring they have access to all the services and resources they need for their recovery journey.

Our case managers are on the frontline when it comes to helping those with the most pressing and complex needs, and, as a charity, we're responding to a growing demand for our services.

Last year, 1,201 people had complex cases and were supported by our case managers, which was an eight per cent increase on the number of veterans supported compared to the year before.

During the year, we recruited four further case managers and now have a team of 21 covering the whole of the UK. Each team member supports veterans within a 75-mile radius. This gives case managers the ability to build up better local knowledge and generate more effective working relationships.

Our case managers are experts in welfare issues and have a hugely positive impact on many areas of people's lives when they're facing serious hardships.

**They can help with a range of issues, such as:**

- homelessness and risk of eviction
- alcohol and drug dependency
- inaccessible and unsuitable housing
- applying for benefits
- claiming War Pensions and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme
- debt and financial issues
- employment issues.

## SUPPORT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

**When life gets tough for a veteran it can greatly affect their families.**

We provide a range of carefully tailored support to the families of veterans. During the past year we have supported more than 75 family members through our two Family Case Managers.

In some cases, we can source private counselling for children and young people so they can nurture their mental health and make positive changes to improve their futures.

We are providing this vital support due to the long waiting lists for the NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.



## A 'GODSEND'

### A mother has thanked Help for Heroes for supporting her through the aftermath of her daughter having a heart transplant.

When Faith was suddenly being treated for congenital heart disease, mum Katherine and her family were struggling with the logistics, financial hardship, and the physical and emotional strain of it all. Because her husband, Stephen, had served in the Royal Air Force, Katherine reached out to us for support, and they were assigned a Family Case Manager, Amy.

"It's been magnificent to be able to speak to somebody and offload," said Katherine.

"Amy has so much compassion, understanding and knowledge. She pointed us in the right direction and did things to help that I didn't have the time, energy or know-how to do. We are just so utterly grateful.

"The first thing Amy helped with was food vouchers, and she signposted us to another charity for clothing support for our children. She also made sure we were receiving any benefits we were entitled to. Since Stephen left the military and, subsequently, stopped working overseas, our income dropped immediately by two thirds, so we have endured long-term financial difficulties alongside the unpredictability of long-term ill health and trauma.

"Amy has helped with letters to our creditors to confirm our hardship. We have now engaged with Step Change debt management charity to alleviate some of the stressors around this.



"Amy has been able to arrange counselling for our youngest daughter, Holly, who was taking her GCSEs at the time Faith underwent her transplant surgery.

"Holly's mental health suffered greatly because of the external stress upon us all, and the one-to-one counselling Amy arranged with a local counsellor has helped Holly tremendously.

"Sometimes it's so overwhelming, from a physical and emotional standpoint, when you're continually facing such

change and trauma. So, being able to speak with Amy, and on occasion have her speak with people on our behalf, has been so wonderful.

"I don't know how we would have got through this period without her. To be honest, she's been a complete godsend."

## HELPING OUR AFGHAN ALLIES

Last year we supported more than 100 interpreters from Afghanistan who worked under UK command during the war. We provided a wide range of welfare support, such as helping people with their finances, accommodation, and employment issues.

These are interpreters who served on the front lines with the British Armed Forces – often risking their safety and that of their family – for information that saved our troops' lives.



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# BUILDING A COMMUNITY THROUGH SPORT AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES



## Sport has played a crucial role in many veterans' recovery journeys.

Finding sport and physical activity again helps people rediscover a sense of camaraderie, competitiveness and confidence, which can have a positive impact on every area of their life.

Last year a total of 1,103 people took part in our sporting and social activities.

## COMMUNITY SPORT SERIES EVENTS

In 2023/24 we held five of our flagship Community Sport Series events to showcase inclusive sports.

Held over weekends, these sport camps are a chance for veterans and family members to spend time with others from a similar background in a relaxed setting. We help with transport and accommodation, too.

Over the course of the weekend, around 10 different sports are laid on by third parties who are experts in their fields. This has included archery, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby, wellness walks, boccia, indoor rowing, powerlifting, weightlifting, walking

We partnered with the Lawn Tennis Association, British Cycling, Archery GB and other national governing bodies to provide sporting opportunities for veterans and their families.

rugby, wheeling rugby, pickleball, tennis, ten pin bowling, climbing, badminton and swimming.

This is a chance for veterans and their families to fall in love with sport again and to become more physically and socially active.

The Community Sport Series was taken to five new locations last year: Liverpool, Exeter, Chelmsford, Inverclyde and Warwick. More than 200 people attended the five events, which is a 100 per cent increase on the year before.

A bigger year of activity is planned for 2024/25.

## LINKING VETERANS UP WITH LOCAL SPORTING ORGANISATIONS

If a veteran tells us they want to try a sport, we'll help them find an organisation near them. To help settle any nerves, one of our team can attend the first session with them.

Through 2023/24, we made it possible for veterans to attend 867 community sporting activities across the UK.

This new way of working is more sustainable for us as a charity and for the veterans. It allows people to form

relationships in their local communities and find great activities on their doorstep. And, over the long term, the benefits will be greater as people will be able to access sport and other positive activities near to them, all while making friends and building a support network.

“We see veterans fall in love with sport and then it becomes a massive part of their purpose and personality.”

Ryan Hunt, Help for Heroes Community Sport and Innovation Manager.



## 'A CHANCE TO EXPRESS MYSELF'

An Army veteran who lost three limbs in a bomb blast says sport he's discovered through Help for Heroes gives him 'a sense of freedom'.

Lamin lost both legs and one arm when he triggered an improvised explosive device during a patrol in Afghanistan.

He now plays boccia every Saturday with a club in Bury, Greater Manchester, after he discovered the sport at one of our Community Sport Series events. Boccia involves throwing or bowling soft leather balls at a target.

"I went to a Help for Heroes coffee morning and was told about a sports camp they were running in Liverpool," Lamin said. "So I drove myself to it.

"I tried boccia, pickleball and wheelchair basketball.

"I really enjoyed boccia. I'd never played it before. I now go every Saturday to a local club where I have met new people; they're all very friendly. We have a competition coming up and it's good to be part of a team again.

"I wanted to find something to do to keep myself occupied, and sport gives me a sense of freedom and a chance to express myself. I wouldn't have found boccia if it wasn't for Help for Heroes.

"It is nice being around other veterans. I haven't seen them for a while so it is good fun to be around them. We have a good laugh.

"Sport brings people together. Being disabled, sometimes there are limitations to what you can do. So it is important to have these opportunities."



## COACHING ACADEMY

Our popular Coaching Academy continues to go from strength to strength. It's a chance for veterans to learn how to become coaches in their chosen sport.

We worked with 24 delegates from 2023/24 and welcomed 35 new participants on the following year's course.

To deliver the course, we've teamed up with UK Coaching, who provide resources, tools and support to coaches, as well as Activity Alliance, a charity that helps organisations improve access to sporting

opportunities for people with disabilities.

Our veterans have gained coaching qualifications in sports such as swimming, surfing, wheelchair basketball and powerlifting.

Once qualified, we help veterans gain experience by coaching locally or through our Community Sport Series events.





“Surfing has made so much difference to my life. It’s kept me level-headed.”

## SHARING THE LOVE OF SPORT

An Army veteran who first found surfing and is now training to become a coach, all through Help for Heroes, said there’s no better feeling than sharing his love of sport with others.

Tim served for 10 years in the Army and completed tours of Northern Ireland and Bosnia.

He says discovering surfing through the Charity saved his mental health, marriage and career at a time when he felt lost.

He’s now working towards a qualification through our Coaching Academy so he can help others ride that crest of a wave.

Tim is a serving police custody officer and has also worked in the prison service and as a firefighter.

He said: “When you watch somebody stand for the first time and catch a wave, and you see the smile on their face, they’re on top of the world. That’s what I get from surfing. That feeling of helping somebody else experience it; there’s nothing better.

“Surfing has made so much difference to my life. It’s kept me level-headed. I’ve learnt to handle my pains and struggles, and it’s kept me on a straight path. It’s kept me in employment, it’s kept me in my marriage, it’s kept me having a good

relationship with my family. I was going down a very rocky road. So, it’s given me time to think, and given me clarity. It’s been a life saver. I’m so grateful and appreciative of my wife and two sons again.

“It was only through Help for Heroes that I found it, and so many friends; it’s just as much about the cup of coffee and cake afterwards, sitting down and chatting.”

When Tim was offered the chance to enrol on our Coaching Academy course, to learn skills and gain a qualification as a coach, he seized the opportunity with both hands.

“The Coaching Academy team has been extremely supportive throughout my journey, providing guidance that addresses both coaching skills and the academic side, which has been especially beneficial due to some learning difficulties and challenges I’ve faced since my time in service. Their patience and understanding have made this whole experience incredibly positive and empowering.

“I am grateful for this opportunity and eager to give back to the community that has given me so much.”



There was a total of  
**391 CAFES**  
with an attendance of  
**1,831**

## SPORTING CLUBS

For veterans who want to compete in a sport, we now have three clubs. Last year we established the Help for Heroes wheelchair basketball club, alongside our already thriving wheelchair rugby and sitting volleyball clubs.

This was done in partnership with British Wheelchair Basketball.

The club has grown to 28 members in the space of a year and has entered a league.

Our wheelchair rugby and sitting volleyball clubs now have multiple teams for players of different abilities.

We now have 89 members of the three clubs.

## CAFES

Help for Heroes cafes are an important part of making our support and services accessible to more people.

Hosted in existing cafes and community buildings, these drop-in sessions are often the first point of attendance for a veteran at one of our activities or events.

It’s a chance for our teams to tell people about all the support and activities that are available and how they can get involved.

Last year, 248 people attended one of our cafes who had had no prior engagement with the charity before.

There were a total of 391 cafes throughout the year, with an overall attendance of 1,831.

# SUPPORTING THOSE WITH LIFE-CHANGING INJURIES



## Delivering tailored, expert care to the very seriously injured.

Last year we worked with 35 veterans classified as very seriously injured.

This includes people with paralysis, serious brain injury, lost limbs and blindness.

Our expert, high intensity, tailored care and support is giving these veterans the best chance possible to have a good quality life while improving their pain levels, comfort, dignity and independence.

The team grew by two members – an occupational therapist and a nurse – which enables us to deliver a more consistent service across the country and to meet the rising demand for our services.

All very seriously injured veterans were seen face-to-face by members of the specialist team. This helps with communication and allows us to assess exactly how they're doing and whether their living arrangements are suitable.

We hosted a residential week in Devon for the families of very seriously injured veterans, too. Three families, with children under the age of 18, attended.

Events throughout the week included an accessible cycle ride along a popular route of natural beauty. It was the first time one of the veterans had been cycling with his twin daughters, as they were young when he suffered a stroke.

Other special family memories created included a veteran going surfing with his son for the first time since his injury. Something he'd wanted to do for years.

We also hosted a family respite weekend, where the veterans were cared

for separately from their families, and fun and relaxing activities were put on for everyone. This was a chance for people to enjoy a stress-free weekend with some pampering.

One person had their first full night's sleep in years, as their partner needs to be turned by a carer throughout the night.

Another partner said it was the first time since the injury she'd had two glasses of prosecco. She said: "For two days I wasn't my husband's carer, I wasn't Mum, I was just Liz – and it was really nice."

“  
For two days I wasn't my husband's carer,  
I wasn't Mum, I was just Liz – and it was  
really nice. ”



# NO ONE LEFT BEHIND



## Our latest fundraising campaign works to ensure the very seriously injured get life-long support.

The No One Left Behind fundraising campaign was launched in June at a special event at Kensington Palace with 130 guests and patrons. We are very grateful to Historic Royal Palaces for donating us this venue space for the occasion.

This fundraising campaign will fulfil a promise to very seriously injured veterans and their families, that we will be there for them for the rest of their lives; ensuring they get the 24-hour, intensive, high-quality care they need and deserve.

We estimate the cost of this support is just over £28.4 million. We have allocated £11 million for this from our reserves, and we are working hard to raise the remaining £17 million over the next three to five years.

We've recruited a fundraising committee of passionate individuals to reach out to their networks and spread the word to help us reach this target.

This committee is chaired by General Sir Gordon Messenger KCB DSO\* OBE DL RM.

Our first major corporate prospect for the campaign has been secured.

Further private engagements at special locations are being planned to build awareness and support for this vital campaign.



# EMPOWERING VETERANS AND FAMILIES TO LIVE WELL



A total of  
**604**  
attended our  
**RECOVERY COLLEGE,**  
an increase of 20 per cent  
on the year before

The first of its kind in the UK, our Recovery College provides educational courses on a wide range of important living-well topics, including nutrition, financial wellbeing, mental health, sleep, and pain management.

Aimed specifically at the Armed Forces community, the courses give people the skills, knowledge and confidence to take control of their lives and their futures.

A total of 604 people attended at least one of our Recovery College online courses last year. This was an increase of 20 per cent on the year before.

These courses are co-designed and co-delivered by veterans and family members with lived experience, alongside those with professional experience – our nurses, occupational therapists and counsellors.

As well as online courses, the Recovery College offers self-help guides so people can take the first steps on their recovery journeys in their own time.

Our self-help guides were viewed 4,770 times during the year.

Ninety-one per cent of students who took a course said their knowledge of the subject had improved.

And 100 per cent of students who completed a survey demonstrated they had retained knowledge and were making positive changes to their lives to help with their recovery.

During the year, we launched a new online course called Care for the Carer.

This course will support people with caring responsibility and the people they care for. It was co-produced with carers in the Armed Forces community, looking at how to minimise the impact on carers' health and wellbeing while caring for others, and looking at effective sources of support.

## VETERANS MOVING FORWARD

Thanks to funding from St. James's Place financial services company, we've continued to train NHS Recovery Colleges across the country so they can deliver our content and courses to the Armed Forces community in their areas.

In total, we have trained 58 staff at 15 Recovery Colleges as part of the Veterans Moving Forward programme.

“  
I can't overstate how  
good this course is.  
Life changing.”

Student on the 'Preparing to Take Positive Action' course





# FIGHTING FOR A FAIRER FUTURE FOR VETERANS



**As well as providing life-changing support, we make sure that veterans' issues are heard loud and clear by governments, local councils and other decision-makers across the UK.**

After the General Election was set for 4 July, we called on all party leaders to sign our 'Veterans Pledge' – a condensed version of our manifesto – committing to:

- Protecting the Office for Veterans' Affairs, to ensure veterans are represented at Cabinet every week;
- Commissioning an independent review of the medical discharge process;
- Ensuring veterans get the benefits and compensation they deserve.

We asked the public to show their support. And 31,000 people joined us in calling for all party leaders to sign the Veterans Pledge.

A total of 1,170 supporters wrote to their local candidates, helping ensure we have many new supportive and well-

informed MPs in Parliament to help us build on the campaign.

More than 50 candidates, spanning all major parties, publicly showed their support for the Veterans Pledge. A key moment was when Conservative Party leader, Rishi Sunak, signed it.

The UK's political leaders all committed to deliver a range of veteran-friendly policies, including a number from our 2024 policy manifesto.

Significantly, Labour committed to put the Armed Forces Covenant fully into law and scrap visa fees for non-UK veterans who have served for four years. These are two issues we have fought long and hard to put right.

At Labour's autumn party conference, we hosted a panel discussion looking at how the medical discharge process is

letting veterans down. This led to a verbal commitment from the new Veterans Minister, Al Carns, to pull together a team in the next six months to explore a review.

- 70 per cent of the veterans we support, who have been medically discharged from the Armed Forces, said they had a bad experience moving into civilian life.
- On average, five people leave the Armed Forces every day, owing to injury or illness (source: Ministry of Defence, 2024).

## REMOVING UNFAIR BARRIERS TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT

More than 109,000 people have signed our petition, which calls on the Government to remove unfair barriers to veterans receiving the compensation and benefits which they are entitled to. This includes:

- Making sure veterans with chronic pain due to service receive compensation which accounts for the long-term, debilitating impact on their lives.
- No longer including compensation as income when it comes to deciding on benefits for veterans.
- Ending multiple assessments for amputees to qualify for benefits (amputees must often re-prove their entitlement every two years).

## COMPENSATION FOR VETERANS WITH CHRONIC PAIN INJURIES

Veterans with chronic pain are not being compensated for the impact that long-term, debilitating pain has on their daily lives. A simple change to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme could improve veterans' lives in this way. As well as being in our policy manifesto, we have engaged with Parliamentarians and officials to achieve support of this policy – and we have spread awareness of this injustice with the wider public.

## LGBT REPARATIONS

We have also continued to campaign with the LGBT Veterans Coalition, led by the Fighting with Pride charity, to provide justice for the hundreds of LGBT veterans who served in the military and

were negatively affected by the historic 'gay ban'. We have fought to ensure MPs support a fair financial package for those veterans who were wrongfully dismissed, simply because of their sexuality.

The Government appointed Lord Etherton to chair the review which looked specifically at veterans who served between 1967 and 2000.

Lord Etherton submitted his report to the government in May 2023. On publication of the review on 19 July 2023, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak apologised on behalf of the country to veterans who were affected by the policy.

Since then, we have continued to campaign with the LGBT Veterans Coalition, led by Fighting with Pride, the UK's only LGBT veterans' charity, to ensure the Government implements Lord Etherton's recommendations in full and provides justice for the hundreds of veterans who served in the military.





# FUNDRAISING EVENTS

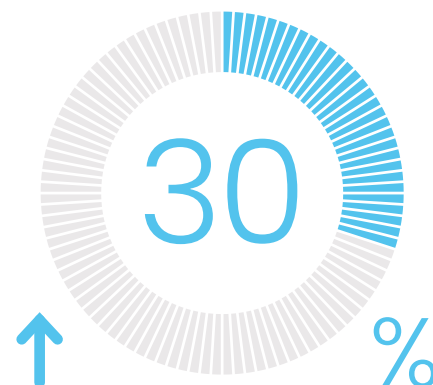
**Our portfolio of fundraising events brought in £1.1 million – up 30 per cent on the year before.**

We held another Big Battlefield Bike Ride, this time to Paris, taking more than 100 riders.

Our Facebook fundraisers, which were predominantly fitness challenges, saw engagement from 24,552 people, and 8,740 took part throughout the year. Operation Swim was back for its second year. Coinciding with the D-Day anniversary, we asked people if they could swim the length of one, two, three or five of the Normandy beaches that were the scene of the Allied invasion in the Second World War.

This virtual event raised nearly £90,000.

We tested several new products, including our Heroes Hikes and Heroes 10k run, with hundreds taking part in these inaugural events. The focus was on developing UK-based, in-person fundraising activities, to build on our community engagement and activation. This will continue into 2025.



rise in profit on the year before from our fundraising portfolio – a total of £1.1m.



# COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

## Improving reach and impact at a local level.

Two new community fundraising managers (CFMs) were taken on as part of a team structure change, to improve representation across the country. We now have five CFMs who will focus on high veteran population areas, working with recovery colleagues in communities to improve reach and build on local knowledge.

Refocusing our efforts on new regional business, we secured pledges of more than £100,000.

Last year also saw the beginning of our Friends initiative, which involves local fundraising groups focused around stalwart fundraisers.

Well-connected in their local area and knowledgeable, these people are 'movers and shakers' in their communities. We recruited 10 groups last year and aim to recruit 15 more this year.

# TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

March 2024 saw the end of the grant period for the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's 'Tackling Loneliness' programme. We are grateful for their support over the past three years, which has enabled us to develop veterans' hubs in mid-Wales to reduce isolation.

One of the highlights included recruiting and training volunteers as 'Buddies' to provide one-to-one support to veterans experiencing loneliness and isolation.

We are now in our third year of funding from Antioch Settlement and we extend our heartfelt thanks for their continued generosity in supporting our core work improving the lives of veterans and their families.

We would also like to thank the Chau Hoi Shuen Foundation Ltd for their kind support, along with all the other trusts and foundations who have supported our vital, life-changing work this past year.



# TRADING

**Our trading arm produces high-quality clothing and merchandise that gives us great brand visibility and allows supporters to show their passion for helping veterans.**



Last year, we had nearly 800,000 visits to our shop website. More than 42,000 customers bought products and £90,000 was given in add-on cash donations at checkout.

We enjoyed growth in our popular wristwear and Christmas cards sections.

During a year of change, we implemented a bold new trading strategy, with a new, modern range of clothing, and a strong emphasis on design, fashion and fabrication.





# CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS



Sir Gareth Southgate represented us at a charity event at brokerage company BGC Group.

Last March saw the launch of a three-year partnership with Ambassador Cruise Line. In June, to mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, the company's two ships were docked together off the coast of Normandy. We were invited on board, where talks from veterans took place as part of services of remembrance.

Maynards Bassetts brought out a special commemorative edition of their Jelly Babies to mark the D-Day anniversary. The limited-edition packets, featuring the Help for Heroes logo, were on sale in Tesco. The company also donated packs of Jelly Babies for everyone who took part in our Big Battlefield Bike Ride and Heroes Hikes.

Long-term partner, Cotton Traders, held another hugely successful golf day, as well as continuing their Help for Heroes clothing line and customer fundraising, all of which supports the charity.

Former England manager, Sir Gareth Southgate, retired pro-cyclist, Sir Mark Cavendish, and his wife, Lady Peta, represented us on the trading floor of financial brokerage company BGC Group.

It was the 20th anniversary of the firm's charity days, and so it was an honour for Help for Heroes to be invited. We want to thank BGC Group for selecting us to take part in the event.

Investment bank, Goldman Sachs, supported us by holding a cycling spinathon in the foyer of their offices. Our patron, Sir Gareth Southgate, also gave a talk at their London office, boosting further donations from Goldman Sachs Gives.

We would also like to thank our partners at financial services company St. James's Place for their continued support. They have been funding and supporting our financial wellbeing course, giving veterans and family members the skills to improve their personal finances.

Jonny Hill, a director at St. James's Place, said: "We're incredibly proud to continue our work with Help for Heroes to enhance the financial wellbeing of our veterans.

"It's a critical area of need that often goes unnoticed and our partnership with the charity is a vital part of our strategy as a responsible business."



Sir Mark and Lady Peta Cavendish.



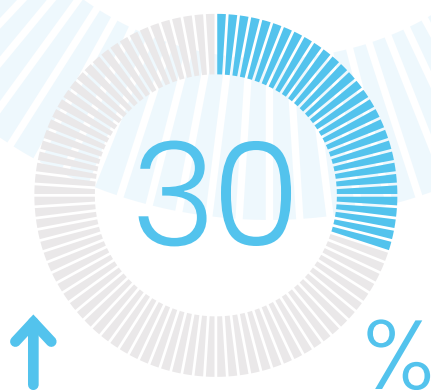
Ambassador Cruise Line's D-Day 80th anniversary service of remembrance.



Limited edition Jelly Babies in support of Help for Heroes.



# PHILANTHROPY



↑  
increase in asks for help from our  
recovery services teams

Last year we saw a 30% increase in veterans asking for help from our recovery services teams – a stark reminder of how vital your continued support truly is. Behind every life we change is the quiet power of generosity – your generosity. As a major donor, you are not just funding programmes; you are restoring hope, dignity, and a sense of belonging for those who've sacrificed so much in service of others.

In 2023/24, we focused on launching the No One Left Behind campaign, dedicated to supporting our Very Seriously Injured veterans and their families. Thanks to your impactful gifts and the generosity of major donors, we are already witnessing the transformational power of this support across our recovery services.

All of this is only possible because of your belief in our mission and the generous support you continue to give. Thanks to you, we're able to walk alongside veterans and their families—providing the right help at the right time.

Your compassion ensures that those who've served our country are not left to face life's challenges alone. Together, we're reminding veterans that they are seen, valued, and never forgotten.





# THANK YOU

**Thank you so much for all your support.  
You're changing the lives of veterans and their families.**

Your support is allowing people to get the help they need to improve their physical and mental health. To overcome isolation and enjoy the company of others. It's helping people find somewhere to live, to get a job and enjoy a purpose and a place in society again. It's helping people to develop the skills, confidence and knowledge to live independently. It's helping people feel part of a community again.

Your support is helping veterans to live well after military service.

But, there are thousands more veterans and families in need of your help today. Please continue to do all you can to support them.

# **HELP for HEROES**

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