



**HELP for
HEROES**

**IMPACT
REPORT**

2022-2023

IMPACT REPORT

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Our support teams were busier than ever last year, providing a lifeline to veterans and families caught in the eye of a perfect storm.

Unprecedented pressures on the NHS and social care. Growing global unrest. And the cost-of-living crisis.

These factors are combining to make life intolerable for many members of our Armed Forces community.

Make no mistake. The Veterans War is real. It's being played out in homes up and down the land, as physical injuries, pain, mental trauma, sleepless nights, poverty, inaccessible homes and social isolation.

Those who risked their lives in service to our country are being pushed to the margins of society.

That's not something we're prepared to tolerate. And we're heartened to know that you're not either.

Thanks to your continued support, last year we helped more veterans and families than ever before as we took our support services to homes and communities across the UK. We put in the miles so that injured, ill and vulnerable veterans didn't have to.

You made it possible for people to get the vital physical and mental healthcare they desperately need.

You made it possible for disabled veterans to have home modifications so they can get into and around their property.

You made it possible for isolated veterans to take part in sport. To make friends and enjoy a brew and a chat with people who understand what they're going through.

You made it possible for life-changing support and activities to happen.

But the mission is far from over. Today, tens of thousands of veterans and their families are facing their toughest battles yet.

Thank you for all you're doing. Please don't let up. Together we can create a society where all members of our Armed Forces community live well after service.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

During 2022/23, every team in our organisation saw an increase in the number of new referrals into their service. And every team responded by helping more veterans than the year before. That was only possible because of your ongoing support.

Here's a look at our activities last year in numbers:

3,940

people directly supported by Help for Heroes' services

That was a 13 per cent rise on the number of people helped in 2021/22.

Last year we delivered

1,770

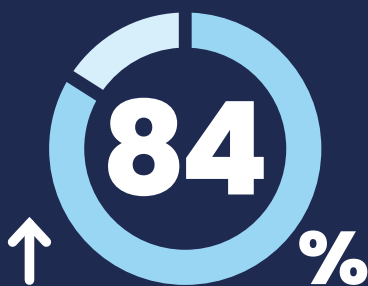
sport and social activities to veterans and family members, to tackle isolation and loneliness.

This was an increase of 48 per cent on the year before.



£818K

was paid out in financial grants to veterans and families in need.



There was an 84 per cent rise in the amount of money we paid out in financial grants compared to the year before.



1,493

injured or ill veterans were helped with their physical healthcare needs.

Our veterans physical healthcare team saw a 54 per cent rise in new referrals.

A total of

454

students completed an online Recovery College course gaining skills, knowledge and confidence to live independently.

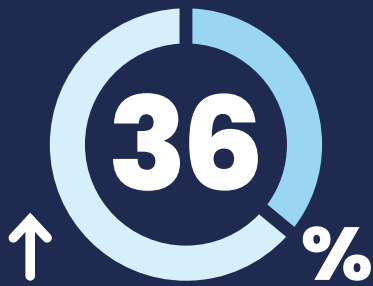
This was a rise of 29 per cent on the year before.



Last year our case managers coordinated the support of

1,168

veterans and family members with complex or multiple welfare needs.



Our Case Management team saw a 36 per cent increase in support requests last year.



Last year we supported

32 Very Seriously Injured veterans.

These are young men and women with profound, life-changing injuries and illnesses who need comprehensive, round-the-clock care.

Our specialist programme provides carefully tailored support to meet each individual's needs.

1,373

veterans and family members helped by our mental health service, Hidden Wounds

The team saw a 13 per cent rise in the number of referrals, as well as an increase in the level of complexity of people's mental health problems.

Our case managers supported

249

Afghan civilians who worked under the command of the UK Armed Forces during the conflict.



ONE THIRD

of our Help for Heroes staff team served in the military or are related to someone who did.

Our support is designed and delivered by people with the same lived experience as the community we're serving.



This was an increase of 42 per cent on the year before.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to create a society where everyone in the Armed Forces community lives well after service.

The financial year of 2022/23 saw the beginning of our 10-year strategy, known as Live Well 2032.

The strategy will help us ensure that everyone who's served in our military is valued, supported and recognised.



Karen was an Army nurse for 40 years and now supports veterans with injuries and illnesses.

DELIVERING SUPPORT ON THE NEW FRONTLINE

We're taking our support services and well-being activities out to veterans' homes and communities across the UK.

Some of the many benefits to this approach are:

- We're more accessible to more people than ever before.
- We see people in their own environment – so we see what people's real needs are. For example, how well veterans can get into and around their home.
- Now that we're no longer responsible for Recovery Centres, we're able to spend more money directly on frontline staff, as opposed to heating and maintaining big buildings.
- By providing support where people live, we're able to help people form positive connections in their local community – so that people find friends, jobs, sport, and hobbies. This helps people with their ongoing recovery.

Last year we launched our Points of Presence in the Community project.

Targeting Lincolnshire and Hampshire as pilot areas because of their high veteran populations, we trialled new ways to build public support and raise our profile within the Armed Forces community.

We ran sports taster sessions, attended local events, including a supercar rally at a shopping centre, and visited Armed Forces family days.

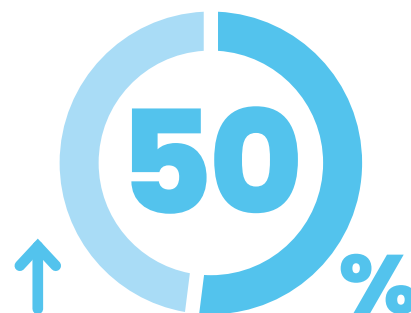
We also increased our media presence in these counties.

As a result, our recovery teams saw a 90 per cent increase in the number of people who reached out to us in Hampshire*.

*Compared to a control group.

“
The charity is always there. They're always available to provide the support in a way that's tailored to you. This charity has saved my life. ”

Gary, RAF veteran



We saw a **50 per cent increase** in new referrals to our teams across **41 counties**, as we grew the geographical spread of the support we offer.



In Lincolnshire, the number of people who received support from us rose by 52 per cent*





FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Two veterans whose lives were turned upside down by strokes have become the best of friends, having met through Help for Heroes.

Former Army Sergeant Major Mick and ex-Royal Navy Warrant Officer Pete are spurring each other on through their recovery.

In an instant, both men's world came crashing down. They lost the use of their right arms. Their hearing and speech were affected. They could no longer walk unaided.

After their short number of allotted NHS physiotherapy sessions came to an end, we stepped in and funded specialist stroke rehab physiotherapy.

Pete's wife Anne said: "Pete has a healthy competition with Mick. He has just walked without a stick. Mick did this last week and it spurred Pete on. He thought 'I'm not letting an Army veteran beat me'.

"I dread to think where we would be without the support we've had from Help for Heroes.

"Mick's wife Jules and I have formed a friendship. We text each other good and bad news. It's good to have someone who truly understands."

Pete was in the Royal Navy for 41 years. He served in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Anne said: "For his first five intensive physiotherapy sessions funded by Help for Heroes, I took Pete in a wheelchair. Since then, Pete has gone from a quad stick to a walking stick, to a walking pole. And now he doesn't use a stick at all.

"We're eternally grateful for Help for Heroes for all the support they've given us."

Mick completed six tours of Northern Ireland during his 17 years in the Army. He also served for 15 years in the Territorial Army.

Jules said: "His stroke was devastating. Mick was at the gym the night before. He went to the gym every day. I was working full-time, which I've had to give up to care for him.

"It's such a long list of ways that Help for Heroes has supported us. The intensive physiotherapy they got us is making a huge difference. They got us an iPad, which means we can carry on with our speech therapy at home. They organised for some sponsorship for hearing aids.

"We're eternally grateful for Help for Heroes for all the support they've given us."

This was after the stroke had taken his hearing in his right ear. And that is really helping with the speech therapy because he can hear his voice."

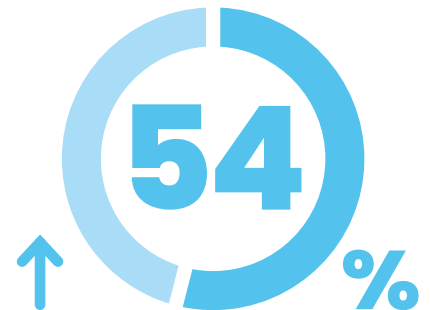
Jules added: "Mick has only ever said to me once that he felt like giving up, and I told him off. I said, 'How dare you. After everything everybody's done, and the work you've put in', I said, 'We're having none of that.'

"I feel, if you don't stay positive, you just end up spiralling into depression, and you can't do that. You've got to keep positive."

STRIVING TO PROVIDE THE BEST FOR OUR VETERANS

We're passionate about providing the best possible support services and well-being activities to those who served our country. That's why we were delighted when the commitment of our teams was recognised by some prestigious organisations.

- Our nurses, occupational therapists and medical advisors visit injured and ill veterans across the UK to help them get the right treatments, therapies, and home modifications. We were thrilled when **our Veterans Clinical Services team won the Community and General Practice Nursing category at the Royal College of Nursing Awards.**
- Our bespoke mental health service called Hidden Wounds uses evidence-based practices to give veterans and family members world class care and support that's carefully tailored to each individual's needs. **Hidden Wounds maintained accreditation of the Quality Network for Veterans' Mental Health Service**, which is the sector's rigorous kitemark, awarded by the Royal College of Psychiatrists.
- Many of our staff have military experience that helps them relate to the veterans they serve. Carol Betteridge OBE has had a highly successful military career, including becoming the first female nurse to run the Camp Bastion field hospital in Afghanistan. In 2015 Carol set up our Veterans Clinical Service, **Carol, who is now deputy director of our support services, was shortlisted as a finalist in the Soldiering On lifetime achievement award.**



The Veterans Clinical Services team saw a 54 per cent rise in new referrals in 2022/23.



Struggling with PTSD, Darren's troubles felt overwhelming until he received counselling from Rose through our Hidden Wounds service.

Our clinical team supported

1,493

people with their physical health.



Our Veterans Clinical Services team and veterans celebrated winning a Royal College of Nursing award.



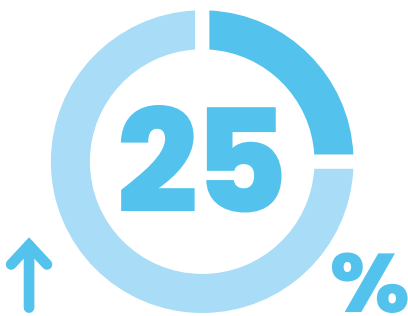
“

Finding adaptive sport through Help for Heroes has been amazing. When I play wheelchair rugby, I feel free again. It feels so good to move fast and be on a par with the lads. ”

More than

4,000

people viewed our Recovery College self-help guides in 2022/23



We delivered 25 per cent more online Recovery College courses than the previous year.

- Our wheelchair rugby team is one example of the many varied sporting opportunities we put on for people of all abilities across the UK. Sporting opportunities with friends can be instrumental in helping veterans find their confidence and love of life again. That’s why we were so proud that **our wheelchair rugby team was shortlisted as finalists in the Sport and Recreation Alliance Community Club of the Year award.**
- Our Recovery College runs courses to help veterans and family members develop skills, confidence and knowledge to live independently. Veterans with lived experience co-create and co-deliver the courses alongside experts in the relevant field. The veteran community is tight knit; they trust one another and help

one another. We facilitate and harness that solidarity. This was recognised when **the Recovery College was shortlisted as finalists in the Soldiering On Awards in the Working Together category.**

These successes were only possible because of your continued help. The awards are reflective of everyone in the Help for Heroes community, including you. **So thank you for changing lives.**





HELPING VETERANS WITH ESSENTIAL HOUSEHOLD BILLS

Last year disabled veterans told us they turned their heating off in the middle of winter because they couldn't afford their energy bills.

This included veterans with brain injuries who are unable to regulate their body temperature. Being cold puts them at serious risk of life-threatening infections.

Disabled veterans have medical equipment that uses a lot of power:

- Ventilators that help paralysed people to breathe.
- Electric wheelchairs that need charging.

So, we set up the Seriously Injured Energy Grant. We provided grants totalling £30,000 to help disabled and very seriously injured veterans pay essential energy bills.

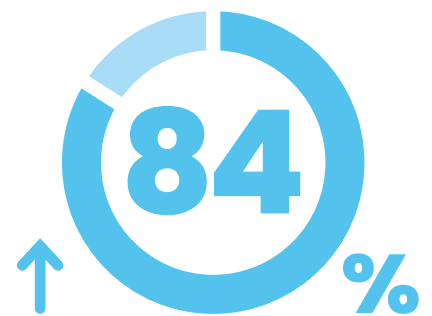
“ To be able to think about money now without panicking, without a full-on PTSD trigger and relapse, is quite literally life-changing. The course has been astronomical in its impact on me. ”

Veteran who completed our financial well-being course, which is run in partnership with St. James's Place.

We also paid out another £112,000 in more general cost-of-living grants to help veterans with their soaring household bills.

Never before have we been forced to pay this amount of money to help our community feed themselves and heat their homes.

Alongside paying this emergency support we gave veterans the skills to manage their personal finances better, and the confidence and support to help people look for work.



In total we provided grants worth £818,000 in 2022/23, an increase of 84 per cent on the previous year.

We paid out

718

grants to veterans and their families.

SUPPORTING ARMED FORCES FAMILIES

When life gets tough for a veteran, it can affect those around them.

Our case managers helped coordinate the support for 65 Armed Forces families last year. This included helping people work out what benefits they're entitled to, liaising with schools, giving people the confidence and skills to apply for jobs, and a whole lot more.

Last year, we partnered with Kooth, a free online mental health and wellbeing service for children and young people.

In the first 11 months of our partnership, 64 young people from veterans' families registered. A total of 56 support hours were provided.

The waiting times nationally for NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) can be anything up to 18 months.

We provided access to private counselling sessions to seven young people who were finding things tough while they were on the CAMHS waiting list.

We also provided access to eco-sensory therapy, which involves being in nature, and equine therapy to two young individuals.

All the therapy we provide access to is approved by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.



MAKING THE WORLD FEEL LESS SCARY

Army veteran Jean has been taking part in photography courses with Help for Heroes.

"Photography has always been a passion of mine. When I'm out with my camera and looking through the viewfinder, the world feels less scary.

"It helps with mindfulness. To be in the moment and to capture the moment. With PTSD, the horrors keep coming back in your mind but when I'm out there with my camera, it helps to dispel that.

"I attended a Help for Heroes day in Birmingham where we met the photography course tutor and other veterans. It was lovely meeting veterans with a shared experience. Ok, it rained a lot, but we had good fun."



We worked with partner charity Fighting with Pride advocating for the rights of veterans from the LGBT+ community.

GIVING VETERANS A VOICE

As well as providing life-changing support we campaign tirelessly on behalf of veterans and their families.

Last year we engaged with over 150 MPs and Peers, raised more than 50 Parliamentary Questions and were mentioned in several debates.

We had a presence at all three main party conferences and have achieved cross-party support in Parliament on several issues affecting the veteran community, including Afghan resettlement, fireworks legislation and injury compensation (War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme).

We campaigned successfully to reinstate the Veterans' Mobility Fund which closed in 2021. Working with Blesma, we highlighted the importance of this essential fund which helped provide veterans with specialist mobility aids.

More than 30,000 supporters signed our public petition in less

than a month. Subsequently, it was announced in the Spring Budget that the Fund would be restarted. We also secured the subsequent bid to administer this £2.52 million in partnership with Blesma, a charity

that supports veterans who've suffered limb loss, or the use of a limb, an eye or sight.



A team from Help for Heroes, including veterans, visited 10 Downing Street to speak up on behalf of our Armed Forces community.

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE RECOVERY A REALITY

Thank you for supporting veterans and their families during these difficult times.

Your continued support is changing lives. And what you're doing matters now more than ever.

Together we're plugging the gaps left by an overwhelmed and underfunded NHS and social care system.

Our teams are providing carefully tailored mental health support.

We're helping people out of social isolation.

And we're stepping in so that disabled veterans don't have to choose between heating their homes in the depths of winter and powering vital medical equipment.

But there's so much more to do. We're at mission critical. The level of need among our veteran community means we mustn't let up.

In any crisis, there are opportunities. And we have big ambitions. With you by our side together we can build a society where everyone is able to live well after military service.



“

A massive thank you to you and all the charities for all the help. This home modification is going to make our lives so much easier and less stressful. ”

From an injured veteran

HELP for HEROES

Find us at: helpforheroes.org.uk Give us a call on: **0300 303 9888**

follow us on:  /HelpforHeroesOfficial  @HelpforHeroes  #helpforheroes

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