

THANKS TO YOU

HELP for
HEROES



"Having spent 40 years as an Army nurse, working for Help for Heroes seemed like a natural progression."

Karen, nurse

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Find out about our excellent
occupational therapists.



Thanks to the generous support of our donors we're able to help veterans struggling with debilitating illnesses and injuries.

In this magazine you can read about the life-changing care and equipment your kindness enables veterans to receive.

But it's not right that without charities like Help for Heroes, veterans wouldn't get the physical and mental healthcare they need.

Thanks to your support, we have a team of campaigners who demand our country's decision makers do better by veterans.

They amplify the voices of our Armed Forces community in the corridors of power in Whitehall and town halls up and down the land. And raise awareness of crucial issues affecting veterans' lives.

For example, chronic pain is recognised as a distinct disease by the World Health Organization, as a pain that persists for more than three months.

However, veterans are currently struggling to receive payments from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme if they're living with chronic pain because of their service.

We're fighting to make sure the thousands of veterans living in pain, isolation and poverty get a fair deal.

THANKS TO YOU, JOHN HAS REASON TO SAY 'CHEERS' AGAIN.

An Army veteran who lost the use of his arms and hands can feed himself for the first time in years using a robotic arm funded by Help for Heroes supporters like you.

John served for 34 years as an infantry soldier, during which time he was injured in a blast in Northern Ireland in the 1980s.

He was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis 15 years ago. The disease first robbed him of the use of his legs and then his arms.

Thanks to a gift kindly left to us by a supporter in their Will, John is only the fifth person in the UK to have a JACO assistive robotic arm. The arm,

which is mounted on a motorised wheelchair, isn't available on the NHS.

John, 60, can now hug his partner, Claire. Take his support dog, Casper, out for a walk. Feed himself. And brush his teeth.

"I can pick up a cup to have a drink, I can feed my dogs and play with them and have independence to do very basic things that I had to ask someone else to do.

"No one can imagine how empowering, in fact, sensational that feeling is.

"I learnt to live with being in a wheelchair, but I always said that I wouldn't be able to cope with losing my hands.

"When this happened, I felt distraught and useless. I'd lost all control again. It feels overwhelming to have some of that control back.

"Without this charity I wouldn't be able to do all these everyday tasks that make life worth living. Without your support, this charity wouldn't be here."



John in his Army days.



NAME: JOHN NEWCOMBE

LOCATION: PRESTON, LANCASHIRE

SERVED WITH: DEVON & DORSET REGIMENT

SERVED IN: NORTHERN IRELAND (6 TOURS), BOSNIA (1 TOUR)



Playing wheelchair rugby I feel free again.”

After 22 years in the British Army, the pain Vicki had from severe osteoarthritis made her job impossible.



“I knew the medical discharge was coming, but it still knocked me for six. I was told I was not allowed back in work pretty much straight away.

“There was a distinct lack of support, guidance and signposting.

“I didn’t get a leaving present or any kind of goodbye. After giving 22 years of my life to the Army, I felt like I was nothing more than a number.

“I felt isolated and on my own.”

Vicki’s had several operations on both knees. Her surgeon said it’s almost certain that her osteoarthritis was caused by the physical demands of military life.

“The pain is there all the time. That’s my life now, I don’t know what normal is.

“I have to adapt and adjust everything I do. But when the pain flares up, it impacts everything. Relationships with my family and friends and how I work. It impacts my sleep. And then when

I’m deprived of sleep and exhausted, everything is so much harder.

“I wish I could get out of my body, just for 10 minutes.”

Vicki has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

We’ve been supporting Vicki through our mental health team, Hidden Wounds.

“They’ve been a godsend,” she said.

To speak to our Philanthropy Team call

07483 048550

0207 337 9822

or email

philanthropy@helpforheroes.org.uk

“My cognitive behavioural therapist (CBT) Alisha has been fantastic. It’s good to talk to someone who really gets it. I don’t have to worry she won’t understand what’s going on with me.

“She gives me the tools to take some of the stuff that we’ve discussed and apply them to real life.

“CBT therapy with Help for Heroes is having a massive positive impact in work, at home, and on my sport.”

Vicki has always been sporty, so when her injuries made being active difficult, it threatened a

huge part of her identity.

“We used to have such an active and outdoor life as a family. When the kids were young, I coached my son’s football team, and I coached gymnastics.

“Then, just like that I was on the sidelines watching. The kids were like, ‘Mum, can you play football with us?’ It’s so difficult to just stand there and do that. My husband and I used to go out walking and wild camping and that’s gone as well.”

Vicki’s sporting passion now is wheelchair rugby, and she plays for Leicester Tigers. She also regularly plays with the Help for Heroes team.

She said: “Playing wheelchair rugby I feel free again. I love being able to speed up and down the court and mix it with the lads.

“I get lost in the game. No worries or pain. I massively missed being in a team and the camaraderie.

“Wheelchair rugby is so important to me. But it’s also something my family get involved with. My husband helps with refereeing and my kids Ellie and Jay come along to watch, have a go and are really interested.”

VICKI’S MESSAGE TO YOU.

“With your support, not only do you give veterans like me a second chance, but you give their family their Mum back, and a wife back.

“Your support for Help for Heroes is a beacon of hope. It fills our hearts with a sense of hope and belonging. I can attest to the life-changing impact your contributions have on veterans in need.”

“Your efforts remind us that our sacrifices are valued and that there is a caring community standing beside us.”





By taking our support into, or close to people's homes, we are helping them to become active members of their community."

Q&A WITH **KAREN JAMIESON**

– VETERANS COMMUNITY NURSE AT HELP FOR HEROES

Thanks to you, Karen can deliver support services within people's communities.

Q: What's your background?

A: I grew up in a village in Herefordshire. I always wanted to be a nurse but wanted to experience life away from my small community. In July 1984, I joined the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps.

I completed numerous postings in the UK and abroad. In 2004, I was the last midwife the Army trained. This resulted in a fantastic posting to The Princess Mary's Hospital in Cyprus, delivering babies.

I gained a Queen's commendation for valuable service for my work in Kosovo. And I was

awarded the Associate Royal Red Cross from the late Queen in 2018 for my services to military nursing.

Q: What's your role at Help for Heroes?

A: My role includes providing high quality clinical advice and support to wounded, injured and sick veterans.

It's vital to take a holistic approach. I work in partnership with veterans setting goals to help them live a fulfilling life in their community.

It was my calling to care for service personnel and their families. Having spent 40 years as an Army nurse, working

for Help for Heroes is a natural progression.

Q: Tell us about the veterans you support and the problems they face.

A: The oldest veteran I support is 97 and the youngest is 22. I have veterans with musculoskeletal injuries, diabetes, asthma, multiple sclerosis, amputations, traumatic brain injuries, cancer, chronic pain, arthritis and dementia.

Many veterans also require support with mental health, and we can refer them to our colleagues in the Help for Heroes Hidden Wounds team.

NAME: KAREN JAMIESON

POSITION: VETERANS COMMUNITY NURSE

BACKGROUND: 40 YEARS IN THE QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S ROYAL ARMY NURSING CORPS

SERVED IN: IRAQ, BOSNIA, KOSOVO, N. IRELAND, AFGHANISTAN



Q: What kind of support can you offer?

A: I work with the veteran to identify their health needs and ensure they're on the right pathway to recovery. We provide health coaching, where we teach veterans things like how to explain their problems to GPs, so they get the right treatment.

In partnership with our occupational therapists, we provide equipment that helps the veteran live independently.

Q: What impact does this support have?

A: The military community are strong and don't like to ask for

help. They can really be struggling by the time they reach out to us. I've never been thanked so much in my whole career.

It was humbling and upsetting to hear from three veterans recently who said if it wasn't for Help for Heroes and the clinical team, they would no longer be here. Life had got so bad, and no one seemed to be listening to them or helping them.

Q: What would you like to say to the Charity's supporters?

A: Thank you does not seem enough. Every day, I see the difference

we make to veterans' lives. Whether it's a bath hoist for an 84-year-old to maintain his independence. Or a community event that a veteran can attend and enjoy with other veterans. Seeing the camaraderie that benefits them physically and mentally is amazing.

The cost of living is difficult for everyone but thank you so much for donating. I would not be able to do what I do without your support and donations.

HELPING PEOPLE DO THINGS THAT MAKE LIFE WORTH LIVING

Kathryn Guy has been an occupational therapist at Help for Heroes for two years.

She said: "We support people so they can once again do what they want and need to do. Daily routines, domestic tasks and hobbies.

"I recently had a veteran who was anxious about leaving their home. A colleague and I met him for a walk. The next time we walked a bit further.

"This gave him the confidence to go to an archery group for 10 weeks on his own. He wouldn't have done that six months ago.

"He's now going to monthly coffee mornings. Once someone has a community, they get support from their peers and that makes all the difference."

78%

of veterans supported by Help for Heroes live with long-term pain.

Kathryn recently received this feedback from a veteran she worked with.

"The support I've received has been amazing, I lived an isolated life with very few friends living nearby. Through Help for Heroes I've done things I hadn't managed to do for years.

"I'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone who supports the charity and allows this fantastic work to happen."

"Receiving feedback like that means the world to us," Kathryn said. "It's great to know we have that sort of impact on veterans' lives, but it wouldn't be possible without our supporters."

It's so important for Kathryn and her colleagues to spend quality face-to-face time with veterans.

Kathryn said: "By visiting veterans in their home we see how they're really doing. I can watch someone make a hot drink, walk around their home or get in and out of a chair.

"If they need a ramp or a stairlift we can help to see if they're eligible for support from their local council. Or we can see if there's charity funding available."

Thanks to you, veterans can get items such as adjustable beds that make a huge difference.



Kathryn (third from left) and her colleagues.

"Many veterans have joint pain, and they struggle at night. If they don't get enough sleep, that affects pain levels, mood, energy, relationships, everything.

"This week a veteran told me, 'Having this bed has changed my world.'" We encourage veterans to attend the Help for Heroes Recovery College courses that help them manage pain and improve their sleep."

Thanks to you, veterans with mobility issues can now use their kitchens properly and cook for themselves, giving them greater independence.

"I recently helped a veteran get an eyelevel cooker. He's been able to bake cakes with his daughter, and he was very chuffed with that.

"It's great when you see people doing activities they never thought they would do again."

Thanks to you, we send occupational therapists to veterans' homes across the UK, helping them overcome physical and psychological challenges that have put their lives on hold.

THANKS TO YOU...

To speak to our
Philanthropy Team call

07483 048550
0207 337 9822

or email

philanthropy@
helpforheroes.org.uk

Last year we reached 13 per cent more veterans and family members than the year before. The cost-of-living crisis and pressures on the NHS mean more people are turning to us than ever.

Thanks to you, in our last financial year:*



Our mental health team, Hidden Wounds, was able to take on new counsellors to meet a 13 per cent rise in new referrals.



Help for Heroes was able to increase the value of financial grants it gave to struggling veterans by 84 per cent.



29 per cent more veterans and family members were able to enrol on a Recovery College course, giving them skills to lead an independent life.

*1 October 2022–30 September 2023



Help for Heroes is a charity registered in England and Wales (1120920) and Scotland (SC044984)

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