



**CARE  
AFTER  
COMBAT**

# Our Impact

INITIAL REPORT

APRIL 2022

# Initial Report

**AS A YOUNG CHARITY, THIS IS THE FIRST IMPACT REPORT TO BE PRODUCED BY CARE AFTER COMBAT. IT COVERS THE PERIOD SINCE THE CHARITY BECAME OPERATIONAL IN 2015, UP TO THE END OF 2021.**

Going forward Care after Combat will produce an impact report every two years.

**“SOME VETERANS  
ARE STILL FIGHTING  
... FOR THEIR LIVES!”**

## Vision

**OUR VISION IS EQUAL PROVISION OF SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES TO ALL OUR ARMED FORCES VETERANS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES.**

In 2014, the Phillips Report highlighted that ex-British Armed Forces veterans were the single largest occupational group within UK prisons.

As a direct result, Care after Combat was formed in 2014 to support our veterans in prison, through the prison gates and back in the community, to give them the best possible chance of making a success of their life beyond custody, and to not reoffend. We also support families of those veterans, as well as serving Armed Forces personnel who might be on remand awaiting court proceedings.

**4%**

AT LEAST 4% OF THE UK PRISON POPULATION ARE EX-ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL.\* ACTUAL VETERAN POPULATION WIDELY ACCEPTED TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN 4%.

\*MoJ report; "Ex-service personnel in the prison population, England and Wales" dated 25 October 2018.

## How we help veterans in the Criminal Justice System

THE CORE MECHANISM OF CARE AFTER COMBAT SUPPORT TO VETERANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IS A SCHEME OF ONE-TO-ONE MENTORSHIP CALLED **PROJECT PHOENIX**.

This mentorship is delivered by staff and volunteer mentors who truly understand the difficulties that ex-Armed Forces personnel can face when leaving the military family and faced with civilian life. Most of our staff and mentors are veterans themselves or have a close association with the military; this helps significantly in building the crucial trust between mentor and mentee. Where and when feasible, monthly forums are held in prisons where all veterans in

custody are welcome to attend, not just those who are receiving mentorship. These forums provide an opportunity for veterans to socialise with like-minded people as well as introducing a psychoeducational aspect at each session. Collaboration with the NHS and other charity partners has seen Care after Combat build upon Project Phoenix to incorporate clinical expertise and interventions into its range of support.

## “TRUSTED MENTORS HELPING VETERANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM”

500+

OVER 500 VETERANS HAVE RECEIVED ONE-TO-ONE MENTORSHIP FROM CARE AFTER COMBAT

1/5

CARE AFTER COMBAT MENTORSHIP REDUCES THE REOFFENDING RATE OF VETERANS TO ONE-FIFTH OF THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

Delivering one-to-one mentorship to veterans in prison up to 12 months prior to release ensures that the veteran is as well prepared as possible for release and for successful reintegration to the community. Our mentors continue to provide their support through the prison gates and for up to 12 months after release (although we have worked with some veterans for well over 12 months post release). The mentor is there as a source of practical and emotional support, a 'handrail' for the veteran to call upon at any time. That support is backed up with a 24/7 helpline should any veteran find themselves in crisis.

Project Phoenix works. It helps veterans make good choices for their future, improving their general wellbeing, and reducing the reoffending rate dramatically. Of those who have received one-to-one mentorship, less than 10%\* reoffend within the first 12 months post-release, compared to the national adult average of 48%\*\*

\*Care after Combat statistics as of March 2020, from a sample of 475 veterans mentored under Project Phoenix; 8% reoffended within first 12 months post release from prison, 2% were recalled due to breach of license conditions

\*\*Table C1a, Ministry of Justice (2019) Proven reoffending statistics quarterly: April to June 2017, London: Ministry of Justice

# Our Impact in Numbers

**1/5**

CARE AFTER COMBAT MENTORSHIP REDUCES REOFFENDING RATES TO ONE FIFTH OF THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

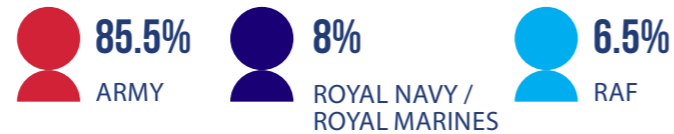
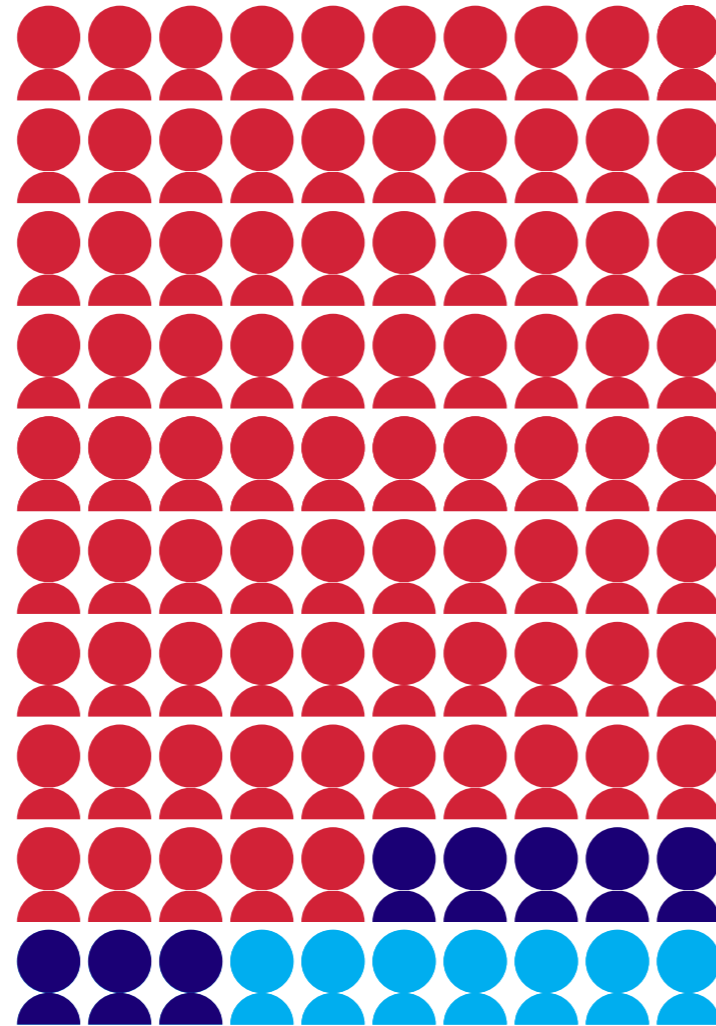
**£185,000**

THE AVERAGE COST TO SOCIETY OF ONE PERSON REOFFENDING AND RECEIVING A CUSTODIAL SENTENCE\*

**£1,500**

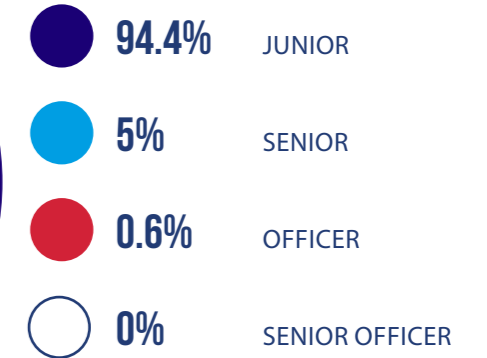
THE AVERAGE COST OF PROVIDING CARE AFTER COMBAT SUPPORT TO A VETERAN IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM PER YEAR

\* Ministry of Justice (2019) Economic and Social Costs of Reoffending – Analytical Report; Ministry of Justice (25 April 2019) Proven Reoffending Statistics – Annual Average data; Table 1, Ministry of Justice (2020) Costs per prison place and cost per prisoner by individual prison establishment 2019 to 2020 tables, London: Ministry of Justice

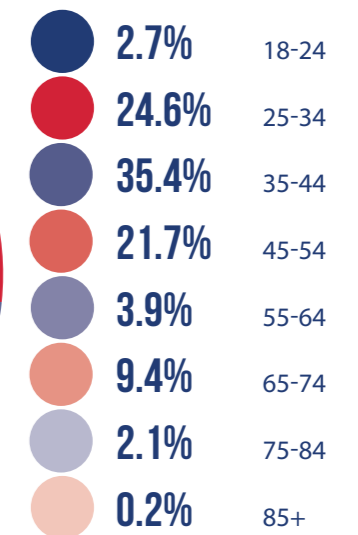


**1058**

TOTAL NUMBER OF VETERANS SUPPORTED SINCE 2015 (TO END 2021)



\* Where declared by beneficiaries

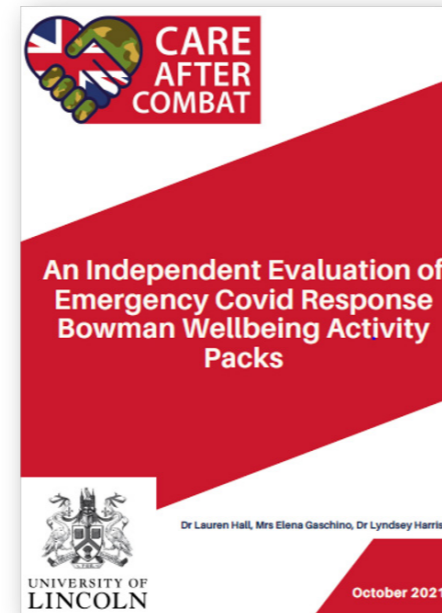


## Our response to COVID-19

THE NUMBER OF VETERANS SUPPORTED BY CARE AFTER COMBAT HAS INCREASED **THREE-FOLD** SINCE THE START OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

When COVID-19 took hold, the UK prison estate went into lockdown, seeing veterans in custody locked in their cells for 23 hours a day, and access into prisons denied for support organisations such as ours. Concerned more than ever about the mental health and general wellbeing of our veterans, **Care after Combat responded by rapidly, yet carefully, developing an innovative remote support service known as Bowman.** Built around the provision of a weekly wellbeing activity pack to each veteran, plus allocation of a remote mentor who works with each veteran to create a bespoke release support package, the service

has proved to be immensely effective and popular. The wellbeing activity pack, containing several facets, is fully interactive and, amongst other outcomes, creates a sense of community that was instantly lost when lockdown came. The tangible effect of the packs has been independently evaluated by the University of Lincoln who found that, based on veteran feedback, the packs have; mediated loneliness, fostered a sense of community, provided a sense of hope, motivated recipients, mobilised social capital, and entertained minds.



# 7783

INDIVIDUAL WELLBEING ACTIVITY PACKS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO VETERANS IN CUSTODY\*

# 1776

WRITTEN RESPONSES HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM VETERANS IN CUSTODY, AND EACH ONE REPLIED TO INDIVIDUALLY BY STAFF\*

“THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE WEEKLY PACKS I RECEIVE, THEY GO A LONG WAY IN HELPING WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH. IT’S GOOD TO KNOW THAT I AM NOT IN THIS ALONE AND THERE ARE OTHERS OUT THERE WHO KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO HAVE SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES AND ARE WILLING TO HELP AND SUPPORT OTHERS LIKE MYSELF.”

— A VETERAN, HMP GARTREE

“I CAN’T THANK THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THESE PACKS ENOUGH, RECEIVING THESE WERE A MUCH-NEEDED LIFELINE ESPECIALLY DURING THE START (AND THROUGH MY SENTENCE). ONCE RELEASED I WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED /VOLUNTEER/HELP IN ANY WAY I CAN IF POSSIBLE. THANK YOU.”

— A VETERAN, HMP HULL

By the very nature of the delivery mechanism of this remote service during COVID-19, Care after Combat has been able to support an ever-increasing number of veterans, increasing our footprint across more prisons. Having fully recognised the incredible efficacy of Bowman and its value to our veterans in custody, this means of remote support now forms a constituent part of the differing levels of service offered to veterans by Care after Combat and has been employed across all the charity’s delivery channels. The effects of COVID-19 are still being felt across the UK prison

estate and the future ‘new normal’ daily regime within prisons, and accessibility, are yet to be seen. Therefore, this innovative, highly effective remote support delivered to veterans in custody by Care after Combat, remains a direct and critical contributor to improving their health and wellbeing.

\*As of 31 Dec 2021

## Mark's Story

**MARK JOINED THE ARMY TO ESCAPE FAMILY ISSUES AND TO GET AWAY FROM HIS HOMETOWN WHERE HE WAS INVOLVED IN THE DRUG SCENE, BOTH TAKING AND SUPPLYING.**

Mark served in the Parachute Regiment, his new 'military family', for five years, including an operational tour in Northern Ireland. He was subsequently diagnosed with anxiety and PTSD, although his PTSD was not service related.

After leaving the Army, Mark drank heavily due to his untreated mental health condition. This resulted in numerous offences of being drunk and disorderly and, eventually, an offence of Actual Bodily Harm which saw him go to prison for the first time. Things didn't really change for Mark after leaving prison and it wasn't long before he found himself back inside with a 2.5 year sentence.

During this second sentence, Mark made a conscious decision to change his life. He completed all in-prison courses required as part of his rehabilitation plan, and he also signed up to work with Care after Combat.

Through Care after Combat, Mark began engaging with much-needed mental health treatment as part of the Veteran Care Through Custody programme (collaboration between Care after Combat and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust), taking part in group forums and working alongside a Care after Combat mentor, one-to-one, as part of Project Phoenix.

**"I AM NOW LIVING A CRIME FREE LIFE AND WILL NOT GO BACK TO PRISON. PETER WAS WITH ME AT EVERY STEP AND HELPED ME TO DEAL WITH EVERY CHALLENGE I FACED, BOTH IN PRISON AND WHEN RELEASED, I COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT HIS SUPPORT. IMPORTANTLY, I KNOW THAT THE SUPPORT OF CARE AFTER COMBAT WILL ALWAYS BE THERE SHOULD I NEED IT."**

— MARK

Mark and his mentor, Peter, walked together every step of the journey, to ensure that Mark remained focused on his personal goals and did not go back to prison.

Mark faced numerous challenges upon release, including those created by the liberty constraints imposed due to his crime, constraints that did not consider the individual trying to turn his life around. Challenges such as these are borne of an automatic assumption that people who commit crime, will always commit crime. Mark challenged this assumption in the best way possible; by gaining employment and turning his life around.

Mark's mentor worked with Probation services to negotiate pragmatic adjustments to his liberty constraints that would allow Mark to be able to travel for work in his home city. Immediately after his release in 2019, Mark applied for jobs and within a couple of weeks found employment. He has remained in employment since, with jobs in construction and engineering.

Mark continued to work hard at his reintegration into society, meeting challenges head on and, ultimately, changing the opinion of others.

**“TO HELP SUPPORT MARK WAS AN HONOUR. HIS DETERMINATION TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES HE FACED AND TURN HIS LIFE AROUND, WAS INSPIRATIONAL, AND AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS OF WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED, EVEN WHEN FACED WITH ADVERSITY.”**

— PETER, CARE AFTER COMBAT MENTOR



Mark was an integral part of the development of the collaborative ReGroup pathfinder project, invited to London to sit on the inaugural workshop to shape the project, sharing his own personal experiences from both in prison and post release.

He was also invited to present his experiences at a training day for Probation staff. Whilst it would have been understandable for Mark to decline such support given his own negative experiences, he accepted the invitation with the view that it was an opportunity to educate those that dictate the rules by which offenders must live on release from prison.

Mark worked with Care after Combat, as part of Project Phoenix, for a total of 16 months post release. The support continued beyond the mandated 12 months to help Mark through what was probably his greatest challenge. Mark was released 'on licence' and approaching the 12-month licence endpoint, became anxious that Care after Combat support would be withdrawn. Mark's anxiety was borne of a fear that without his mentor's support, his chance of returning to prison would be significantly increased.

Going back to prison would have broken him – the need was clear - Care after Combat support continued. Mark lives his own life now. Mark and Peter still talk.

## Harry's Story

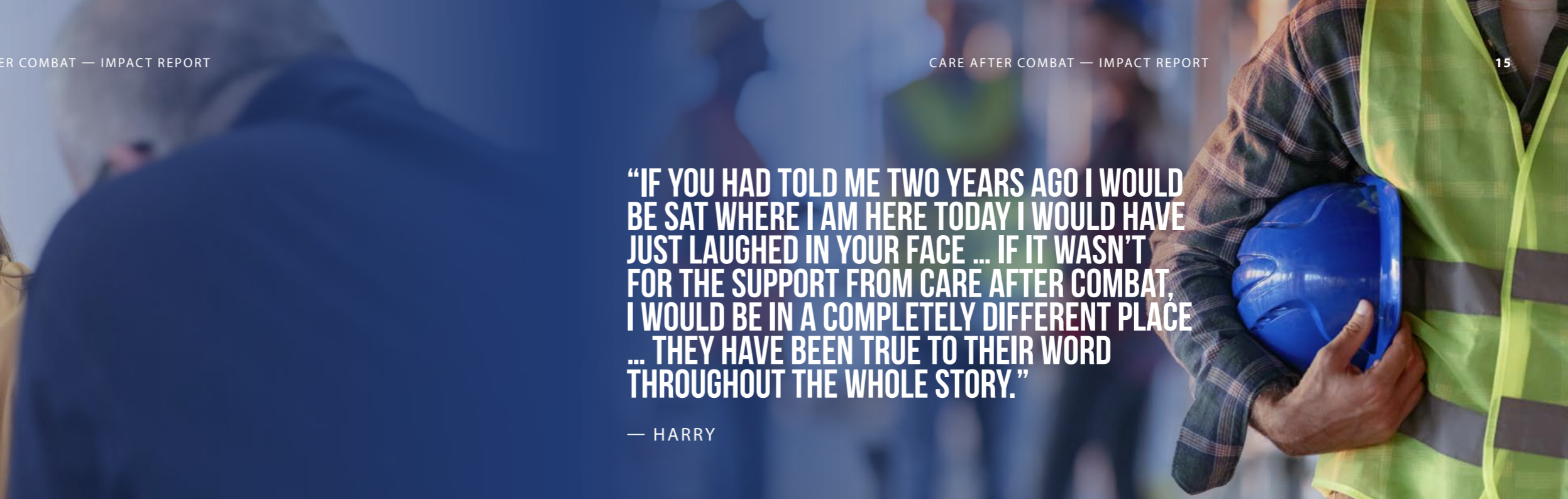
**HARRY SERVED IN THE ARMY FOR 15 YEARS. HE COMPETED MULTIPLE TOURS OF AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ DURING WHICH HE DESCRIBES HAVING LIVED THROUGH MANY 'BAD TIMES'.**

These experiences led to a decline in Harry's mental health and he was subsequently diagnosed with service related PTSD while still a serving soldier. In addition, during active service Harry sustained a back injury. It was the injury to his back which eventually resulted in his medical discharge from the armed forces. Harry reports that despite his diagnosis of PTSD he was never offered any treatment while in the forces.

Over the years Harry used alcohol to manage the increasing symptoms of PTSD, with increasing dependency and, in his own words, reached his 'lowest darkest place' and was 'a broken soldier'. His relationship had broken down, life was

out of control, he did not want to be alive anymore and so made attempts to take his own life.

Harry became involved in criminal activity. Following arrest, he was referred to the veterans' charity Project Nova who in turn referred Harry to Care after Combat following his sentencing; the way that the ReGroup pathfinder operates to ensure veterans remain on a single care and support pathway.



**“IF YOU HAD TOLD ME TWO YEARS AGO I WOULD BE SAT WHERE I AM HERE TODAY I WOULD HAVE JUST LAUGHED IN YOUR FACE ... IF IT WASN'T FOR THE SUPPORT FROM CARE AFTER COMBAT, I WOULD BE IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PLACE ... THEY HAVE BEEN TRUE TO THEIR WORD THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE STORY.”**

— HARRY

In prison Harry signed up to the Veteran Care Through Custody program, a partnership service between Care after Combat and the NHS. Harry engaged in a full healthcare assessment. His PTSD and alcohol dependency was recognised and he was enrolled on a course of treatment to address the symptoms of PTSD with a healthcare professional with military experience. Monthly group forums were delivered within the prison for all military veterans. Harry took on the role of Veteran Representative working closely with the Care after Combat team. He also signed up for a Care after Combat mentor to support him with the practical and emotional adaptation to prison life

and preparation for release. During any prison sentence it is common to be transferred from one prison to another and this was indeed the case for Harry, however, Care after Combat continued to provide its service to Harry regardless of location. Harry has since stated that this continuity of care was a major stabilizing factor for him.

Harry was in prison during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prisoners were locked in their cells for 23 hours each day, with no visitors permitted. Care after Combat maintained a minimum of weekly contact via Wellbeing Activity packs, telephone calls and letters. Care after Combat also provided

Harry with stamped addressed envelopes and writing paper weekly to further enable essential communication. As part of Harry's assessment in prison it was identified that he needed to find new employment when he was released from prison. Care after Combat spoke at length with Harry to establish areas of work that would be suitable and of interest to him. Care after Combat liaised with local employers so that a plan of potential employment could be actioned ready for release. Types of work and potential employers were identified. Training packages, to ensure Harry was job ready, were arranged to take place soon after release. Care after Combat made necessary enquiries and ensured that

Harry received funding he was still entitled to via the MoD's Enhanced Learning Credits scheme. Under this scheme, veterans can receive financial support to contribute towards their higher-level learning.

Harry has now been released from prison. He has completed employment training and is now employed full time. He is sober. He has been able to reconnect with his partner. Harry is fully accepting of the help available. He has reengaged with Project Nova, has approached Op Courage which is an NHS provision of care for military veterans in the community, and continues to work with Care after Combat.



## Working together for the good of our veterans

**NO SINGLE ORGANISATION CAN PROVIDE EVERYTHING THAT OUR VETERANS NEED. THAT IS WHY WE COLLABORATE, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, WITH STATUTORY BODIES AND OTHER THIRD-SECTOR ORGANISATIONS, TO ENABLE THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOR OUR VETERANS.**

Whether delivering services in partnership, or referring to specialist support, we aim to optimise the pathways to successful reintegration into society.

In Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, the Veteran Care Through Custody (VCTC) programme was developed in partnership with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust in 2017, combining Care after Combat's Project Phoenix with NHS Clinical expertise. This enabled full healthcare needs assessment for all veterans coming into prison and direct referral into prison healthcare services as required. Veteran awareness training is delivered to prison general staff and prison healthcare staff, and to police and probation teams.

**“WHEN I CAME TO PRISON I WAS EFFECTIVELY MORALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY BROKEN. THROUGHOUT MY SENTENCE, CARE AFTER COMBAT HAVE SUPPORTED ME IN WAYS I NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE. THE SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE THEY PROVIDE IS SECOND TO NONE, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY THEY HAVE ENABLED ME TO COME TO TERMS WITH AND DEAL WITH MY ISSUES. EVEN AFTER I’M RELEASED I KNOW THAT NO MATTER WHERE I AM, THEY WILL CONTINUE TO BE THERE FOR ME.”**

— HARRY

Building upon VCTC, in 2019 the NHS commissioned an end-to-end provision of care pathfinder known as ReGroup; Care after Combat, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Project Nova together provide support to veterans from first point of contact with the CJS, through courts, custody and back into the community. Having achieved astonishing outcomes, the ReGroup pathfinder has informed the NHS England national strategy for veterans.

In the Northeast of England and Yorkshire, Care after Combat's Project Phoenix is one of ten portfolio projects within the Veteran Places, Pathways and People programme led by the charity Sporting Force and scheduled to be delivered in 2022 and 2023. This exciting collaboration gives several partners the chance to work together to offer a broad set of resources and expert support to the veterans that we collectively support.

# The Care after Combat journey, so far...

**Project Phoenix** becomes operational in HMP Winchester, HMP The Mount and HMP Wayland with headquarters in Fareham, Hampshire.

**ReGroup Pathfinder** – Further collaboration with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Project Nova, delivering end-to-end support to veterans in the Criminal Justice System.



**Finalists** in two categories of the Health and Social Justice Awards.

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

**Care after Combat** is registered as a Charity on 25 November 2014.

**Veteran Care Through Custody** – Care after Combat’s first collaborative service with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is delivered across Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire – bringing in clinical expertise to the Project Phoenix model.

**Bowman** remote support service developed, and delivery commenced in May 2020, as a direct result of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

Headquarters moves to Newark, Nottinghamshire.

**Collaboration** with multiple veteran support organisations in the Northeast of England and Yorkshire under the Veteran Places, Pathways and People programme.

# Financial Summary

AS THIS IS THE CHARITY'S FIRST IMPACT REPORT, THE FOLLOWING FIGURES ARE AVERAGES TAKEN ACROSS THE FIVE PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS REPORTING YEARS 2016 TO 2020 INCLUSIVE, GIVING A MUCH-SIMPLIFIED VIEW.

For full published annual accounts see the 'Charity Commission for England and Wales' website and search Care after Combat (Charity number: 1159342)

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME

**£584,696**

AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE

**£548,220**

(94% OF INCOME)

AVERAGE ANNUAL DELTA

**+£37,476**

INCOME VS EXPENDITURE DELTA ACROSS 5 YEARS. WHICH, PRIMARILY, FORMS THE OPERATING RESERVE CURRENTLY HELD.

**£187,380**

**98.5%**

OF EXPENDITURE IS DELIVERING SERVICES (CHARITABLE ACTIVITY) WITH 1.5% SPENT ON FUNDRAISING COSTS.\*

\* From latest published accounts, not 5-year average.

# Prison Coverage

- FULL SERVICE
- REMOTE SUPPORT SERVICE
- TRANSFEREES SUPPORTED



# Thank you

**CARE AFTER COMBAT IS SUPPORTING MORE VETERANS THAN EVER; THE NEED IS CLEAR, AND WE HAVE RESPONDED BY DELIVERING LIFE-CHANGING AND LIFE-SAVING SUPPORT TO THOSE VETERANS WHO NEED IT MOST.**



Thanks to an utterly dedicated and selfless team of staff and volunteer mentors, combined with an innovative and determined approach to helping our veterans during COVID-19 lockdowns, we have seen the number of veterans on our books soar to over three times the figure of March 2020. This reflects the charity's strong belief that veterans in the Criminal Justice System truly deserve the same level of support and chances afforded all other veterans. We know that what we do works, it improves lives and life chances, and that is why the whole team continues to strive to deliver the best possible service, whether alone or in collaboration with our numerous partners, to our deserving veterans.

But none of this can happen without the altruistic support of many like-minded people and organisations. Your incredible contributions, from the solo fundraiser through to larger company support, are essential to keeping our charity operating and ensuring the best outcomes for those in need of our help. For this, I sincerely thank you all and look forward to taking the charity forward, with you at our side.

**Adrian Kirk**  
— Chief Executive

# Care after Combat is supported by...





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