



**CARE
AFTER
COMBAT**



Our Impact

2022-2023

Impact Report

THIS IS THE SECOND IMPACT REPORT TO BE PRODUCED BY CARE AFTER COMBAT. IT COVERS THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD FROM THE START OF 2022 TO THE END OF 2023.

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 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 to 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.

3.6%

AT LEAST 3.6% OF THE UK PRISON POPULATION ARE EX-ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL.* ACTUAL VETERAN POPULATION WIDELY ACCEPTED TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN 3.6%.

* MoJ Official Statistics – Ex-Service personnel in the Prison Population England and Wales published 27 Oct 2022.

How we help veterans in the Justice System

THE CORE MECHANISM OF CARE AFTER COMBAT SUPPORT TO VETERANS IN THE 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.

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

“TRUSTED MENTORS HELPING VETERANS IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM”

1000+

OVER 1000 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

465

PRISON FORUMS HELD BY CARE AFTER COMBAT 2022/23

Our Impact in Numbers

1/5

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

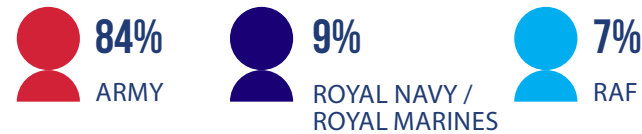
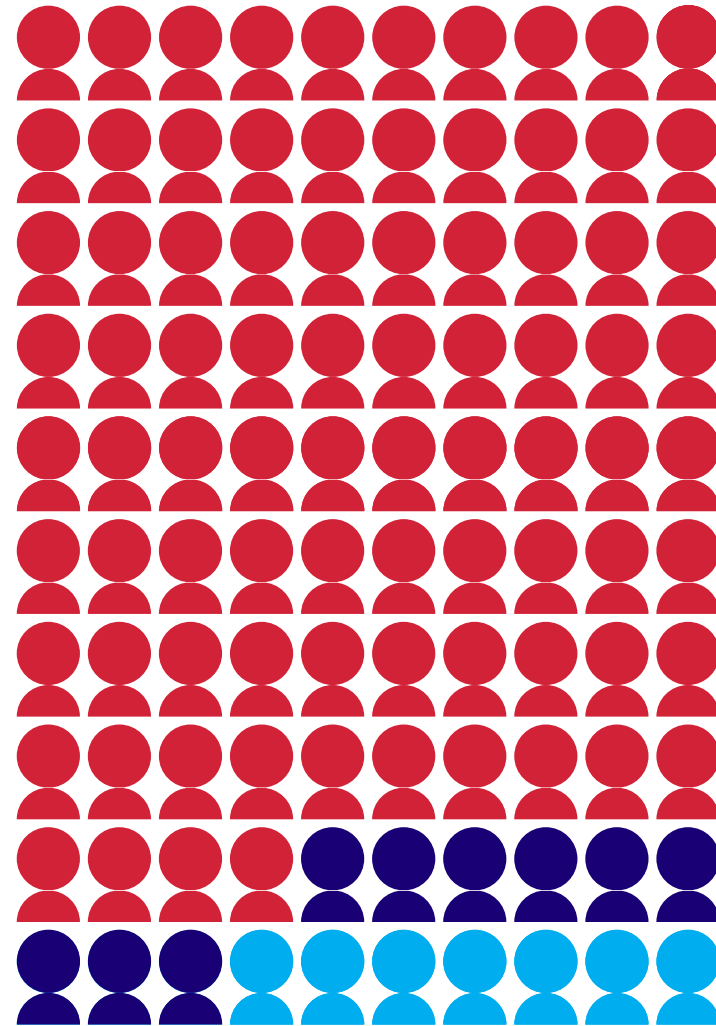
£185,000

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

£1,500

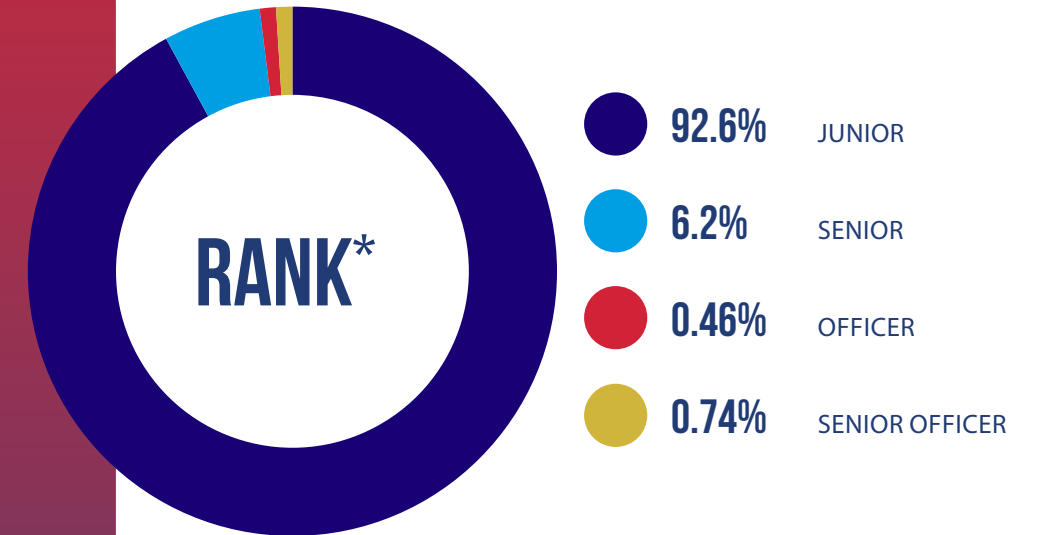
THE AVERAGE COST OF PROVIDING CARE AFTER COMBAT SUPPORT TO A VETERAN IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM PER YEAR

* 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

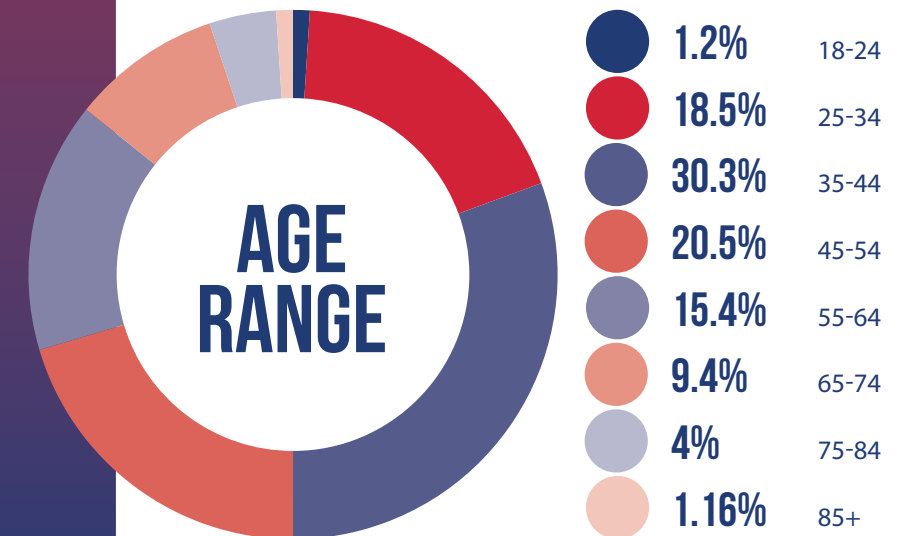


2027

TOTAL NUMBER OF VETERANS SUPPORTED SINCE 2015 (TO END 2023)



*Where declared by beneficiaries



A Transformative Period

THE LAST TWO YEARS HAS SEEN CARE AFTER COMBAT DELIVER **MORE LIFE-CHANGING AND LIFE-SAVING SUPPORT TO VETERANS IN JUSTICE THAN EVER BEFORE**



The King's Award for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

The continued exponential growth in numbers of veterans supported can be seen from the adjacent graph – a **268% increase in just two years**. Concurrently, we have expanded our geographical coverage to include all of England and Wales, providing better continuity of support as veterans move locations.

To deliver this increased level of support has meant that additional operational staff were needed; a Deputy Operations Lead at HQ and a further Regional Coordinator to cover the West Midlands area. With a focus towards the end of this period in recruiting more Volunteer Mentors

(VMs), as well as managing the current VM cohort, a new role of Volunteer Mentor Coordinator was established. And with five active volunteer Ambassadors brought onboard this period, helping to raise awareness of the critical services provided by Care after Combat, the tactical and strategic reach of the charity continues to grow apace.

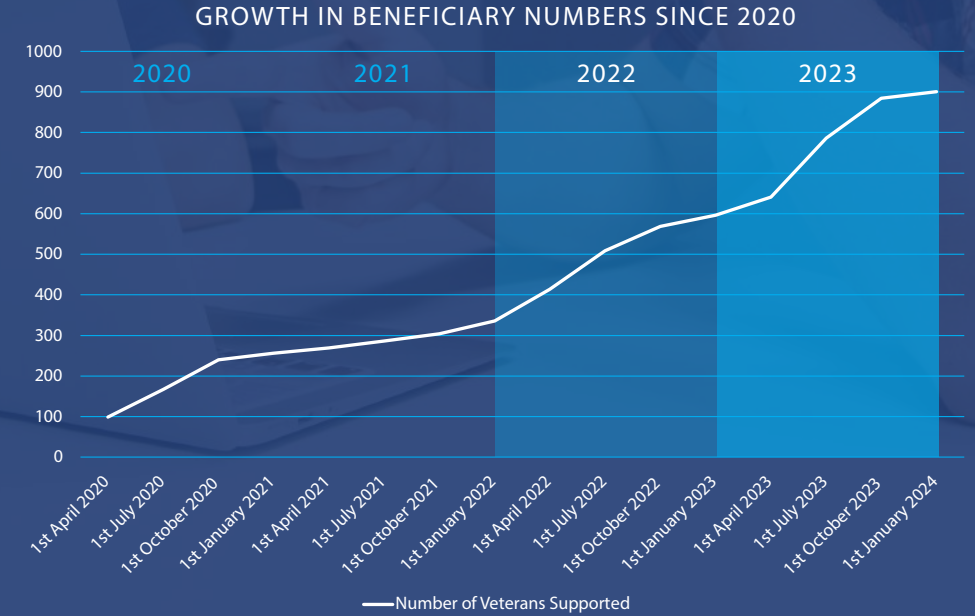
On the governance front, our Board of volunteer Trustees has seen significant growth and introduction of additional skills to enhance the already impressive Board skillset even further. Our Chair at the start of the period, Captain Stephen Anderson OBE Royal Navy, retired as Chair and

21,077

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

3745

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



“CAN I TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THANK YOUR CHARITY ON A WHOLE - ESPECIALLY MY MENTOR. THROUGH THE CHARITY MY MENTOR SAVED MY LIFE... SOUNDS DRAMATIC, BUT IF IT WASN'T FOR THE SERVICES OF THIS CHARITY, AND THE ABOVE AND BEYOND SUPPORT I GOT FROM MY MENTOR, I DON'T KNOW IF I'D BE HERE TODAY.... PERHAPS SERVING A VERY LONG SENTENCE OR DEAD”

Trustee in accordance with our Trustee ‘time-served’ policy, and was replaced by David Rogers, a long-standing Trustee and latterly the Ministry of Justice’s Head of Privately Managed Prisons.

This bolstering of the Care after Combat Team has allowed significantly increased levels of support to be delivered to veterans in need whilst maintaining a high-quality service, with that all important personal touch.

Care after Combat remains a small but highly effective team delivering impressive outcomes for veterans and, as you can

see from above, much of this incredible work is delivered and supported by volunteers, be they Mentors, Trustees, Ambassadors or Fundraisers.

In recognition of this, in November 2023 Care after Combat was awarded the **King’s Award for Voluntary Service** – ‘The MBE for Organisations’. A truly humbling honour to close out a transformative period in this young charity’s history.

*Since March 2020

John's Story

JOHN SERVED IN THE ARMY FOR 15 YEARS. ON LEAVING THE ARMY, HE FELL INTO A LIFE OF CRIME THAT INVOLVED DRUG USE AND EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE. AS A RESULT, HE COMMITTED A SERIOUS OFFENCE RESULTING IN HIM RECEIVING A LIFE SENTENCE, HIS JOURNEY THROUGH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM BEGAN.

Care after Combat met John in 2018, when our veterans service was set up for the first time at a Category C prison. John had already served a significant number of years in the system and attended the very first forum, along with several other veterans.

It was clear that John was a very angry individual who had no trust in the prison system or the people within that system. He felt that he had been let down numerous times when things that had been promised did not materialise. This lack of trust, a common trait with long term prisoners, extended to an obvious suspicion of the intentions of our group, and in his own words, he had seen charities 'come and go'. At the end of the first meeting, he declared that whilst he wished us luck, he would not be attending

another forum. The message to John at that point was that we would always be there to support him, and he would always be welcome to join us at any time during his journey. John returned the following month and every other month for the remainder of his time at the prison before progressing to a Category D establishment, with open conditions, where our support continued.

A continual challenge with John, was trying to help him address his lack of trust with the system and convince him that there was life beyond prison with light at the end of the tunnel, he had to work with the system to achieve this. John could just not believe that this was the case, and it was a block to him signing up to our peer mentorship support project, Project Phoenix. Twelve months after our

"THE TRUST I HOLD WITH GORDON AND CARE AFTER COMBAT, HAS PREVENTED ME FROM RETURNING TO PRISON AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, ENDING MY LIFE. IF THIS STATEMENT CAN HELP OTHERS, THEN IT IS A MUST THAT IT BE WRITTEN TO ENABLE ANOTHER VETERAN TO HAVE THAT BROTHERHOOD THAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED."

— JOHN

initial meeting with John, he requested that support. Along with the available peer mentorship, he also engaged with the Covid response platform, Project Bowman, supporting veterans through unprecedented challenges.

The challenges continued throughout his time at the Category D establishment. He was turned down for parole on multiple occasions, he was also returned to closed conditions for a breach of regulations. However, following continued support from Care after Combat working alongside the Prison Veteran in Custody Support Officers and Offender Management teams, parole was eventually granted. John had spent numerous years in prison, he had become institutionalised, society had changed, the truly hard work required to prepare John for future challenges

and new issues was apparent, but his mentor Gordon, was there to walk alongside him all the way.

John was released to Approved Premises in a location far removed from the area he was familiar with; in essence he was having to start a completely new life. There were a lot of temptations that John had to negotiate to ensure he would not return to a life of crime.

Gordon continued to provide wellbeing support along with other Care after Combat staff and volunteers, a real team effort on a weekly basis. John was referred for support with cooking and personal wellbeing via an external agency, this developed John's life skills and allowed him to carry out housekeeping and personal day-to-day tasks, developing

“IT IS AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY ALONGSIDE A LONG-TERM PRISONER WITH INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES AND MILITARY EXPERIENCE. TREATING A NEW HOME AS IF IT WERE A CELL OR BARRACK ROOM WERE BARRIERS THAT WILL BE AN ISSUE FOR SOME TIME. BUT REGULAR FACE-TO-FACE SUPPORT HAVE, AND WILL CONTINUE, TO MANAGE HIS INDEPENDENT LIVING AND EMOTIONAL STABILITY.”

— JOHN'S MENTOR

his self-pride and esteem. John was referred to the local council, and with collaborative support from councillors, more permanent, supported accommodation was acquired. With further support from Care after Combat's collaborative partners; SSAFA and Hull 4 Heroes (V3P partners), the accommodation was furnished. John also received assistance in sorting out his military pension and receiving the correct benefits that allows for important financial stability.

John's lifelong fight against drug and alcohol addiction will continue, but he signed himself up to AA meetings and has attended them ever since, content in the knowledge that he will have the Care after Combat team to call on for support if required.

John continues to respond positively in his life choices and is progressing well in his current environment, he is stable, and his confidence has improved. John is constantly tied by the restrictions of his lifelong license, but he will work with statutory and support agencies to ensure that he does not return to a life of crime and prison. Collaboration, which has been a defining element of the support plan for John, will continue, and Care after Combat will be at the forefront of that support for as long as John requires it. Gordon continues to walk alongside John; John is now also supported by a serving member of his old Regiment.

John is a completely different person to the man who presented himself at the first forum; he now trusts.

Mathew's Story

MATHEW JOINED THE ROYAL NAVY SOON AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL AND ACHIEVED MUCH DURING HIS 6 YEARS' SERVICE. HIS REPORTS DESCRIBED HIM AS AN ABLE INDIVIDUAL, QUICK TO LEARN AND COMPETENT IN APPLYING NEW SKILLS.

Mathew was deployed on operational tours, but he does not report any related ongoing problems. Mathew does report being the victim of, and witnessing, significant bullying during his time in service.

Mathew left the Royal Navy because of the ongoing bullying. He felt unable to report the experiences he and his peers endured for fear of further recriminations for himself or them.

After leaving the service Mathew was apparently successful. Supported by family, Mathew gained employment and afforded good accommodation, however from a mental wellbeing perspective he was not coping. He described himself as "short tempered" with a tendency to "lash out";

personality traits Mathew said were not applicable to him prior to joining the Royal Navy. He struggled to maintain friendships, was drinking excessively, and used non prescribed drugs to manage increasing anxiety. Mathew described himself as increasingly unpredictable and bad tempered and recognized that this was why people avoided him. Despite his insight, he did not seek support, he lacked knowledge of what was available and did not approach his GP due to the shame he attached to the cause of his problems.

Mathew was eventually convicted and given a prison sentence following a physical altercation on a night out. When Care after Combat met Mathew he was acutely anxious, and described himself as "out of control".



“PRISON TRANSFERS CAN BE UNAVOIDABLE LEADING TO DISRUPTIONS IN SUPPORT, CARE, AND TREATMENT, OFTEN REMINISCENT OF THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF THE DYNAMIC NATURE OF SERVICE LIFE. CARE AFTER COMBAT MENTORS PROVIDE A CONSISTENT SOURCE OF TRUSTED SUPPORT, ENCOURAGING ONGOING ENGAGEMENT WITH ESSENTIAL SERVICES SUCH AS HEALTHCARE.”



A Care after Combat mentor made regular visits to Mathew, building a relationship that would form the basis of trust for Mathew to engage with mental healthcare services within the prison. This was the first time Mathew had engaged with any mental health service. He was diagnosed with service-related PTSD. The mentor remained part of Mathew’s multi-disciplinary team which included healthcare and probation services. With the support of his mentor, Mathew engaged positively with healthcare and made significant progress, learning how to cope with anxiety and strong emotions.

Mathew was released from prison and, once again, from a practical perspective he was successful. He remained engaged with his Care after Combat mentor but on a

reduced basis. Mathew believed that he had mastered his difficulties and was less receptive to regular support meetings. Unfortunately, another physical altercation resulted in Mathew being recalled to prison with additional charges pending. At the time Mathew frequently voiced thoughts of “giving up” and harming himself, he formulated plans to end his life believing that the world and people were “out to get me”.

Mathew had a much longer stretch in prison following his second conviction. However, with the consistent support of his Care after Combat mentor he reengaged with psychological healthcare. Custodial sentences can mean transfers from one prison to another, and this was the case for Mathew. He was transferred to three different

prisons during his sentence. Consistency was provided via his mentor and via the healthcare provider which had set up a veteran specific service across several prisons. Consequently, Mathew’s treatment was not disrupted despite the transfer of prisons. On release Mathew was referred to, and continued to engage with, community healthcare services provided by NHS Op Courage supported by his mentor. These were stabilising contributions to what Mathew found to be extremely challenging license conditions. Engagement with his mentor and ongoing psychological interventions were instrumental in helping Mathew navigate and adhere to his license conditions.

Mathew has now been out of prison for a significant period. He was supported by Care after Combat for over a year and

has developed skills compatible with a crime free life. He is working full-time in employment of his choice; he has a home and is maintaining long term relationships.

He no longer uses drugs and manages his alcohol intake. Difficult life situations continue to present, and Mathew does at times need additional support, however he is knowledgeable about the services available and is confident in his ability to access them.

Mathew is now an advocate for Care after Combat, and he has made valuable contributions to the development of services dedicated to veterans involved with the justice system.

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 the Northeast of England and Yorkshire, Care after Combat's Project Phoenix was one of ten portfolio projects within the Veterans' Places, Pathways and People programme led by the charity Sporting Force, commencing in January 2022 and concluding December 2023. This highly productive collaboration, funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, gave several partners the chance to work together to offer a broad set of resources and expert support to the veterans that we collectively support, and leaves a legacy of improved communication and collaboration.

In Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, the Veteran Care



OpNOVA



Supporting Veterans in the Justice System




THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST



serco



Nottinghamshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Through Custody (VCTC) programme in close partnership with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, continued to be delivered throughout 2022 and 2023, combining Care after Combat's Project Phoenix with veteran specialist 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 was delivered to prison general staff and prison healthcare staff, and to police and probation teams.

Informed by the 3-way collaborative pathfinder 'ReGroup', April 2023 saw the commencement of NHS England's new

national service for veterans in justice called Op NOVA. Care after Combat is proud to be co-delivering this brand-new service, alongside Forces Employment Charity, to veterans across England. 2024 will see an expansion of the in-prison support element of Op NOVA creating a continuous pathway of support, throughout a veteran's journey in the justice system, that was proven to be so effective via ReGroup.

May 2023 saw the commencement of dedicated Project Phoenix services into HMP Fosse Way, a brand-new private resettlement prison managed by Serco. The prison has state-of-the-art facilities that enable highly effective delivery of support to veterans in custody.

The Care after Combat journey 2022/23

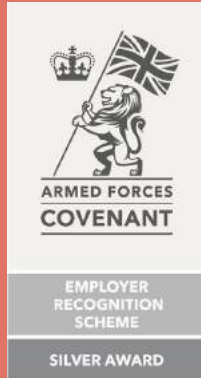


OCT 2022

APR 2023

OCT 2023

NOV 2023



Awarded Defence Employer Recognition Scheme 'Silver' Award

Op NOVA
NHS England's new national support service for veterans in justice in England – Care after Combat co-delivering with Forces Employment Charity

Nottingham & Nottinghamshire ICS Health & Care Awards
– Lord Lieutenant's Partnership Award & Overall Winner – VCTC



King's Award for Voluntary Service
– Care after Combat



HSJ Awards
Military & Civilian Partnership – Finalist - VCTC

Financial Summary

Since charity accounts are published in arrears, this summary uses the two accounting periods that follow on from the last Impact Report, namely 01 Nov 20 – 31 Oct 21 and 01 Nov 21 to 31 Oct 22.

The 2021-22 financial reporting year was a particularly difficult year for raising charitable funds therefore reserves were utilised to enable continued and, indeed, increased delivery of services to veterans.

Those reserves have since been replenished as will be shown in the next set of accounts to be published.

2021

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME
£500,050

AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE
£445,542
(94% OF INCOME)

AVERAGE ANNUAL DELTA
+£54,508

RAISING FUNDS
£11,565

2022

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME
£382,221

AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE
£489,074
(94% OF INCOME)

AVERAGE ANNUAL DELTA
-£106,853

RAISING FUNDS
£6,826

100% +
OF INCOME OVER THE TWO-YEAR PERIOD HAS BEEN SPENT DELIVERING SERVICES.

Prison Coverage

PROJECT PHOENIX COVERAGE



CaC OP NOVA COVERAGE*



* Op NOVA service only delivers in the pre-custody setting in the North West of England. Alternative NHS support to veterans in custody and post-custody is delivered by Veterans HQ (formerly Liverpool Veterans HQ) commissioned via NW regional NHS Health & Justice teams.

Thank you

“I REMAIN ASTONISHED AT JUST HOW MUCH CRITICAL SUPPORT THE RELATIVELY SMALL CARE AFTER COMBAT TEAM DELIVERS TO VETERANS IN JUSTICE. CURRENTLY ACTIVELY SUPPORTING OVER 1000 VETERANS; A TEN-FOLD INCREASE IN NUMBERS IN THE FOUR YEARS SINCE MARCH 2020, AND NOW PROVIDING SERVICE COVERAGE RIGHT ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES, CARE AFTER COMBAT’S HUGELY POSITIVE IMPACT FOR OUR ARMED FORCES VETERANS IS CLEAR.”



An incredibly committed team of staff and volunteers delivers and oversees the day-to-day operations of Care after Combat, whilst also being instrumental to the strategic growth that we have seen over this two-year period. These same people are also the team that organises and delivers multiple fundraising events throughout the year.

In addition, there are many individuals and groups out there, strong supporters of Care after Combat, that go to incredible lengths with their own events to raise much needed funds. We are also funded by generous grant-making organisations, small and large, regional, and national.

Without the direct financial support of individuals, teams and organisations that share our passion for helping those who have served in our country’s Armed Forces, we could not do our job of providing life-changing support to some of our most vulnerable veterans.

Thank you all for your steadfast and selfless support that has enabled more veterans than ever to get the help they desperately need. The whole team at Care after Combat, and the veterans we help, are truly grateful.

Adrian Kirk
— Chief Executive

Care after Combat is supported by...





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 www.careaftercombat.org
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**CARE
AFTER
COMBAT**