



Defence Medical Welfare Service

Impact Report 22/23



Welcome

Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS) is an independent charity that delivers professional and confidential welfare support to those who serve our nation.



Every year our dedicated teams deliver direct welfare support to those who serve. As we approach 80 years of supporting the frontline, we are yet again moved by the challenges faced by those who dedicate their lives to supporting and protecting others. Our compassionate teams offer non-clinical and clinical support to make sure these individuals get the support they need and recognises the commitment they have made for the nation.

Throughout our history we have built a wealth of knowledge, expertise and credibility. We have developed dedicated systems and processes to support a quality assured service delivered by specialist teams, with respect and understanding of our beneficiaries and their operating environments. We know the importance of maintaining operational effectiveness and networks of relevant statutory and non-statutory support to maximise outcomes for beneficiaries through practical solutions and supported referrals.

As the organisation continues to grow, we will further develop and enhance our services for those we support. We will continue to innovate and drive improved outcomes for our service users and their families.

Our future ambitions are to

- Maintain excellent, person-centred support for our beneficiaries
- Expand our services to provide a wider geographical reach
- Continue to add additional capabilities around clinical support and counselling services addressing mental health
- Extend support to additional frontline cohorts who face difficult and traumatic events
- Focus on prevention and early intervention to reduce the impact of issues before that have major impacts on health and wellbeing
- Secure further commissioning of our service within the NHS
- Increase grant funding to sustain and grow critical welfare support
- Further use of IT systems and future technologies to reduce costs whilst increasing accessibility and self-provision when preferred by those we help.

Paul Gaffney, Chief Executive Officer

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The Board are very proud of an excellent achievement through 2022-2023. DMWS achieved significant expansion of welfare services whilst maintaining critical existing projects, all of which made such a difference to the lives of those on the frontline during their time of need. We were also very proud of the income growth which allows us to help more people; this expansion is particularly of note in today's challenging financial climate and is due to an increase in donations, grants and welfare services and the fantastic work of the DMWS team. The Board thank our supporters, partners and the DMWS team for this increase in reach.

**Maryanne Burton,
Chair of the Board of Trustees**

What we do

We are there for people who serve or have served, when they need us, through the stress and uncertainty of medical treatment and beyond.



Our Mission:

To provide a high-quality medical welfare service to those who serve the nation



Our Purpose:

To help people during their most critical time of need



Our Vision:

To be the most respected provider of welfare support for those in frontline services



Our Values:

Commitment – Integrity – People – Working Together

We provide medical welfare support to those who work in frontline services and protect our nation. This includes **The Armed Forces Community (serving, reservists, veterans), NHS staff, Blue Light Services, The Merchant Navy, members of the Police Federation of England & Wales, and their families.**

We help people to

- Have better experiences of healthcare and recover more quickly
- Feel less lonely and more connected to their communities
- Overcome alcohol and drug misuse
- Feel less stressed and anxious
- Access treatment for mental health illnesses such as PTSD
- Stop thoughts of taking their own life by finding purpose and happiness
- Have better relationships with their loved ones
- Access financial support to reduce the stress of money
- Find and stay in safe housing
- Find meaningful employment or volunteering opportunities to use their skills after service

Where are we?



44 hospital locations
across England,
Wales, Scotland and
Northern Ireland



9 hospitals in Cyprus



Various community
locations



National Response
Service helpline to
cover locations where
we don't have a
physical presence

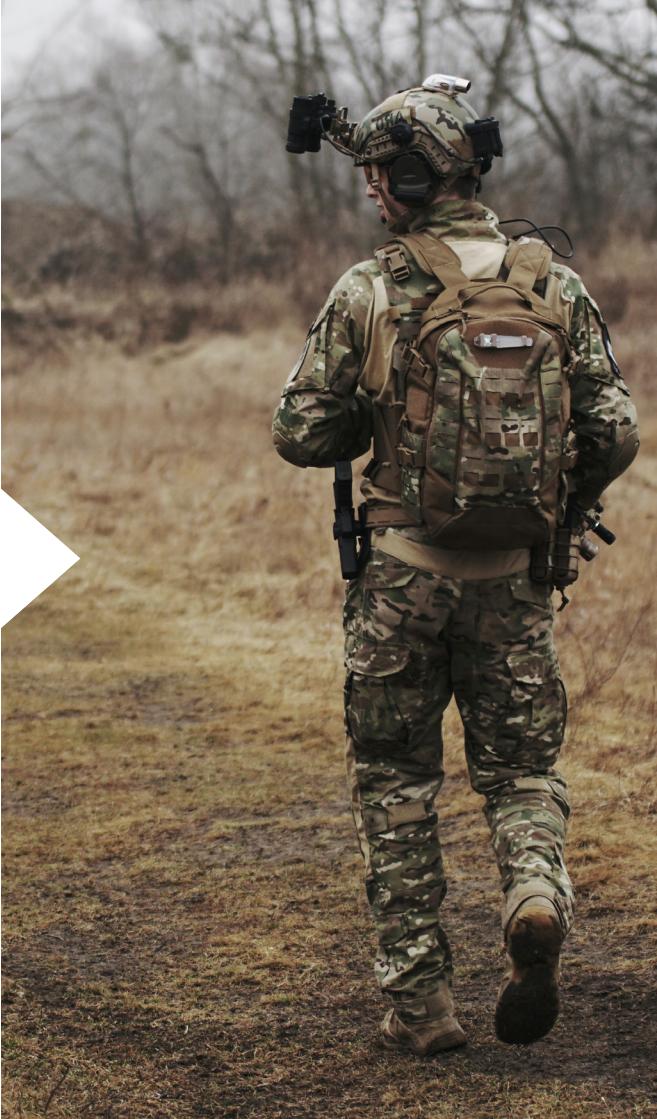


● Hospital Locations ● MoD Locations ● HQ Location

Mark's story

Mark is a 35-year-old Army veteran who was found unconscious in a hotel room. He was homeless and had attempted to take his own life by overdose. Mark had been living in a tent for a long time and had lost faith in any organisation being able to help him after years of false promises and failed support.

When DMWS met with Mark, it was clear he still wanted to take his own life. Our Welfare Officer got him moved to safety in a Mental Health Hospital and worked with the Homeless Team there to arrange temporary accommodation. With dedicated support from the DMWS Welfare Officer, Mark started to gain trust and confidence, beginning to believe that he was valued and would be supported.



The Result

Mark has made brilliant progress with the support of our Welfare Officer. He has been discharged from hospital with temporary accommodation and is a high priority for permanent housing. Mark is now taking part in sailing and a local zoo project. He is also getting support for PTSD. Most importantly, he doesn't want to take his own life anymore.

Our Welfare Officer continues to help Mark with his housing position, as well as food parcels and support with getting the benefits he is entitled to. DMWS will continue to be there to support Mark as he makes plans for the future.

Total Beneficiaries Apr 22 – Mar 23



4,122

Direct service users



3,182

Family members/carers

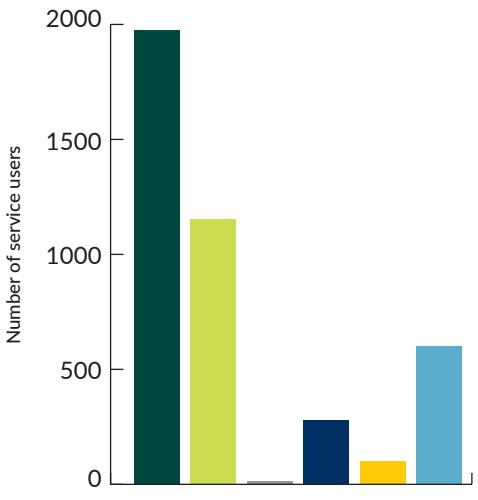


2,295

NHS staff

Total 9,599

Demographics of service users



23%

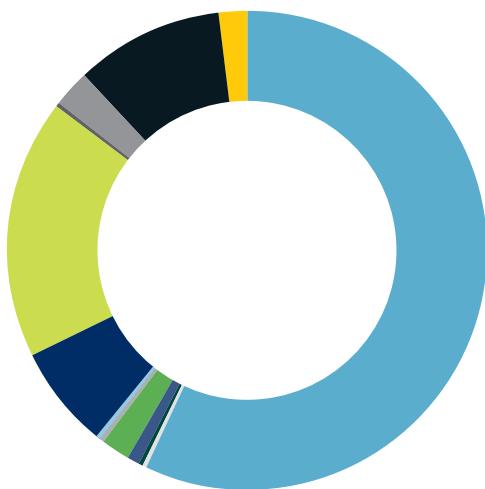
Female Service Users



77%

Male Service Users

Direct service user breakdown by service



2,352 Army

7 Foreign Forces

13 Gurkha

42 Merchant Navy

78 MoD Other

8 NHS Staff

412 Royal Navy

8 No military link 70 Unknown

Financial Overview



Support Us



How does my donation help?

£5 could pay for a welfare officer's hospital parking charge, meaning they are able to conduct more face-to-face support.

£10 could pay for a series of phone calls by a DMWS welfare officer to a person isolated and in need of support.

£25 could pay for a DMWS welfare officer to provide emergency support and source items to families whose loved ones are in hospital.

£50 could pay for a DMWS welfare officer for half a day, enabling them to support several cases concurrently.



Donate by text

Donate £5 by texting Lion 5 to 70460

Donate £10 by texting Lion 10 to 70460

Donate £25 by texting Lion 25 to 70460

Donate £50 by texting Lion 50 to 70460

Text donations cost the amount you are donating, plus one standard rate message charge.



Donate by Cheque/Post

Please make your cheque payable to St John & Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service

Send your cheque to:

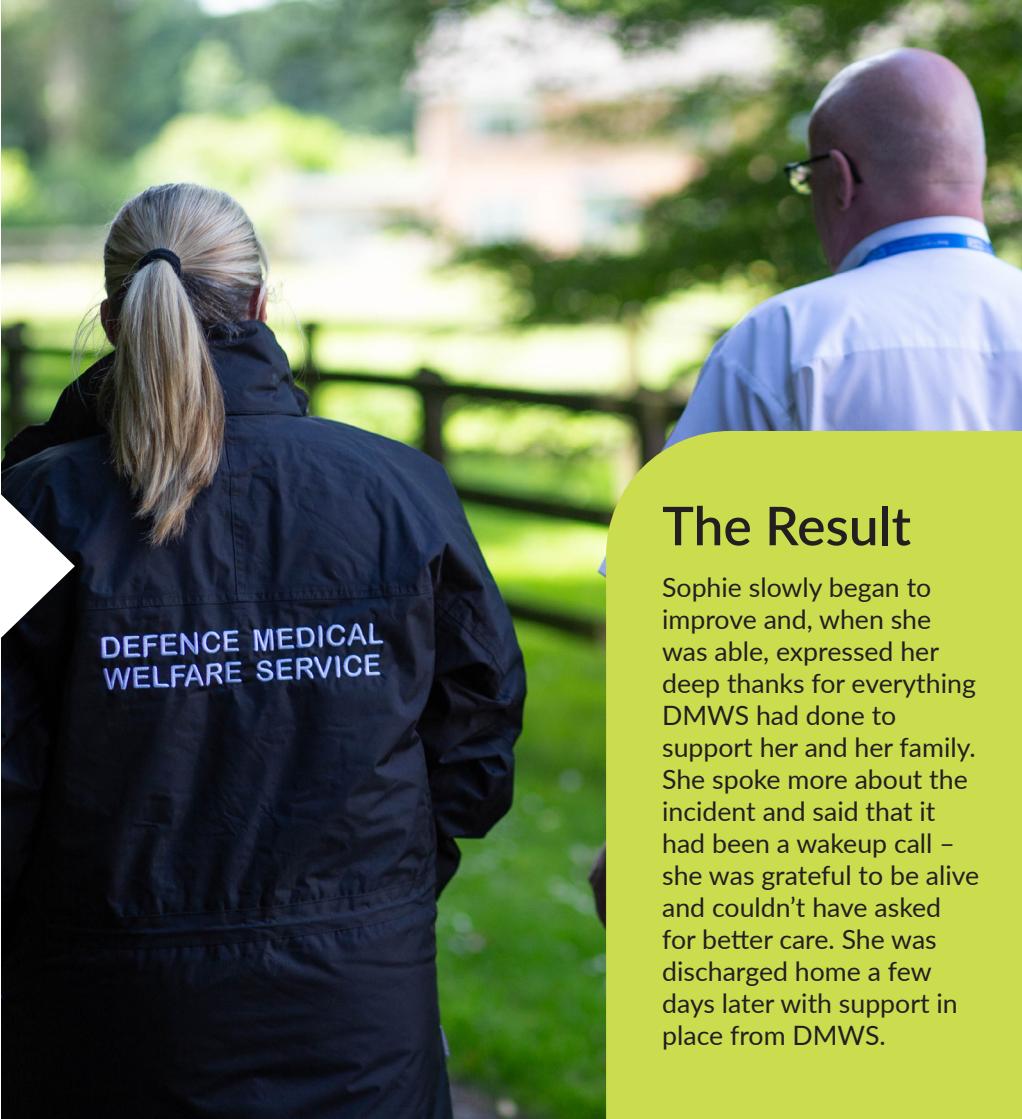
**DMWS, The Old Stables,
Redenham Park, Andover,
Hampshire, SP11 9AQ**

Please include your details if you can as we would like to say thank you and let you know we have received your kind donation.

Sophie's story

Sophie is a 46-year-old female veteran who was admitted to a specialist hospital following an overdose. She had acute kidney failure and liver damage which would mean a long stay. Her husband (also a veteran) and daughter (21 with learning difficulties) wanted to stay with her. Our Welfare Officer organised accommodation and helped the family settle in. They told us Sophie had been struggling with poor mental health for a while, but they hadn't realised the full extent.

To support Sophie and her family during this difficult time, our Welfare Officer accompanied the husband and daughter to visit her in Critical Care and met with them daily to get updates. Sophie's husband was understandably worried which we provided support with. Her daughter was particularly upset and overwhelmed so our Welfare Officer supported her to take regular breaks and spent time with her to build rapport. She later said she felt she now had someone to talk to.



The Result

Sophie slowly began to improve and, when she was able, expressed her deep thanks for everything DMWS had done to support her and her family. She spoke more about the incident and said that it had been a wakeup call – she was grateful to be alive and couldn't have asked for better care. She was discharged home a few days later with support in place from DMWS.

“

We received incredible and invaluable support from DMWS from the very beginning. The logistical nightmare of being away from home, on top of the worry for our little boy, was overwhelming. The support from DMWS meant that stress was simplified so we could concentrate on being present for our little ones. I will always be grateful for your support. Thank you.

Wife of Royal Marines Veteran



We reduced likelihood of NHS Mental Health Crisis Intervention for 157 people



We supported 91 beneficiaries who battled with suicidal thoughts or had attempted to take their own lives

Snapshot from Project Locations

- **Cambridge**
We supported 41% of beneficiaries with frailty
- **Catterick**
We supported 67% with poor mental health
- **Cyprus**
We supported 95% of people with the impact of their health treatment
- **Hereford**
We removed independent living barriers for 30% of people
- **Kings Lynn**
We helped 87% of people with sport and activity barriers
- **Lanarkshire**
We helped 34% of beneficiaries with Dementia/Alzheimer's
- **Newton Aycliffe**
We supported 25% with debt concerns
- **Glasgow and Clyde**
We reduced time taken for GP to see beneficiaries for wellbeing concerns in 53% of cases
- **Oxford**
We provided support for 45% of cases who needed help following a fall
- **Plymouth**
We reduced social isolation for 91% of beneficiaries

Op RESTORE, the Veterans Physical Health and Wellbeing Service

This NHS service ensures those who have served in the UK Armed Forces access the right NHS treatment for significant, continuing physical health injuries and related medical problems caused by their time in the Armed Forces. The service works with military and civilian medical professionals, along with Armed Forces charities, to understand military life and the longer-term care and support that may be required for veterans, service leavers, reservists, families and carers.

DMWS is a key partner in this work, seeking to identify and assist with multiple factors affecting the lives of veterans and their families, thereby providing holistic care, alongside our NHS services, to help individuals in very difficult situations. Op RESTORE has now received over 700 referrals into the service since 2016, with over 500 of them since partnering with DMWS.



“

The feedback from service users and their families has been excellent. The link with the DMWS Support Worker has made each individual feel that they are valued and their needs are being heard and taken seriously. DMWS are absolutely key to this work and have an incredible team of dedicated staff working with Op RESTORE.

Sue Pillar-Lea

Independent Chair, Op RESTORE Programme Board, NHSE

Jim's story

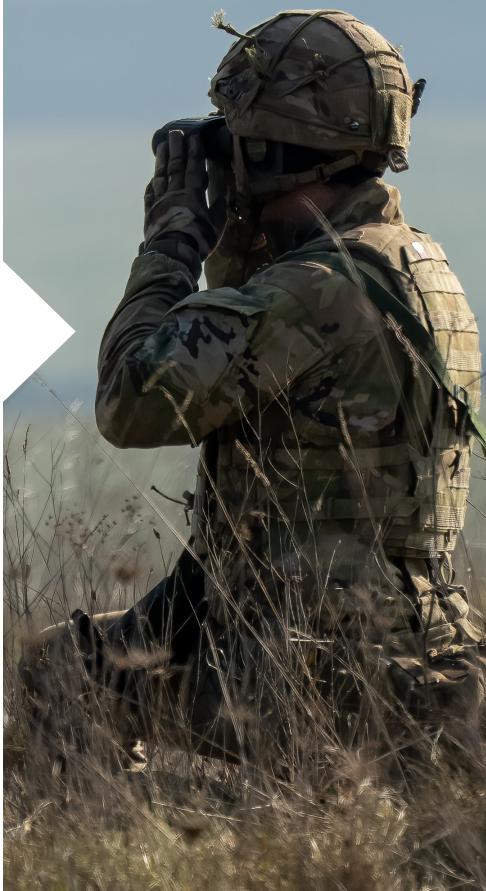
Jim was a 50-year-old veteran who was living homeless with his dog. The individual had a history of drug misuse and had been turned away from other services because of his dog. Sadly, he was admitted to critical care following an attempt to take his own life. The veteran was very disengaged and didn't really talk to medical staff on admission. He had not had contact with his family for several years and his sole companion was his dog. He was trying to discharge himself, despite being very unwell, as he was worried about the dog's care.

Our DMWS Welfare Officer managed to strike a rapport with Jim through a shared military background. This breakthrough made a pivotal difference in Jim's willingness to take up support and trust DMWS. With this, our Welfare Officer learnt about the challenges Jim was facing and worked tirelessly to secure financial support and housing for him despite constant rejection due to his dog. The Welfare Officer also managed to contact the veteran's brother and arrange for them to meet; this was an incredible development for the veteran who had missed having a connection with his loved ones.

The Result

Jim gained great comfort from being reunited with his brother and eventually the Welfare Officer secured a bungalow, through social housing, based on his medical condition and veteran status. Sadly, Jim passed away before he had the chance to take up the space. He died following a visit to his brother which was very tragic, but the brother was grateful that they had the chance to reunite.

Our Welfare Officer went on to provide bereavement support to Jim's brother, who was also a veteran, and his family. They helped secure funding for the funeral and made referrals for ongoing support. The Welfare Officer was invited to scatter his ashes alongside the family.



Jon's story

Jon is a veteran who had struggled with alcohol dependency for 30+ years. This meant he was in hospital several times a year. On his last admission he was referred to DMWS for help.

Our Welfare Officer provided constant reliable support across a year, building trust and rapport through their shared military backgrounds. This gave Jon the confidence to engage which was absolutely crucial after years of distress and failed support. Critically, the Welfare Officer secured Jon a place in a residential programme and built up his confidence so he could attend. They have continued to support Jon with housing, first securing an initial placement and then finding more appropriate housing to suit Jon's needs. With the ability to manage complex cases and offer unlimited support, our dedicated Welfare Officer also guided Jon through the journey to get a PTSD diagnosis and identified trauma from his childhood which was also causing distress.

The Result

Our service has had life-changing impacts for Jon, including a fantastic 10 months without a hospital admission! This 88% reduction in admissions is a credit to both Jon's determination and DMWS's knowledge, compassion, and commitment to our veterans. Jon now takes part in various veteran activity groups, including sailing, fishing, and gardening, a great way to make friends and positive mental health. He also engages with OpCourage for specialist support for his PTSD.

Additionally, through regular ward visits to see Jon, our Welfare Officer has also identified and supported 10 other veterans. This highlights the importance of hospital-based welfare in allowing us to reach those who need support but don't know how to access it.

“

I am incredibly proud of the quality of support that DMWS delivers. Our clinical teams deliver an intelligent and professional service which has a specialist understanding of those who use our services and a unique commitment to their needs. DMWS operates an integrative model of care which focuses on three key areas of support: physical health concerns, psychosocial contexts, and mental health and wellbeing. In 2022/23 we extended our clinical capacity in response to emerging need, and we are excited to develop further through 2023 and beyond.

Abby Dryden, Operations Director



“

DMWS have helped me cope and become confident. I am now able to deal with what my situation throws at me. The Welfare Officer has helped me build back to a stronger version of myself.

DMWS Service User

Ben's story

Wing Commander Ben was on adventure training when he became ill. He was taken to hospital in France where a large mass was found on his lung. He was transferred to RCDM at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham where DMWS provided support to Ben and his family. This included daily visits, emotional support, help with navigating clinical information and being a friendly face to ease anxieties. The Welfare Officer organised accommodation on the hospital grounds which relieved some stress for them.

After the biopsy results sadly confirmed cancer, DMWS were a supportive presence and discussed plans for how to break the devastating news to the children. DMWS remained a consistent support to everyone through Ben's chemotherapy and arranged for the whole family to stay in the accommodation to reduce the risk of infection. It was a huge comfort for them to be together.

Ben's treatment was completed but sadly the news was not as positive as everyone had hoped. DMWS continued to be a familiar face, supporting Ben and his family over the new year period to cope with the news and through the difficult decision to opt for surgery.

The Result

Thankfully Ben's surgery went well and DMWS have remained a constant presence for the whole family during an uncertain time. Although we still don't know the end result, we will continue to stay by Ben's side and provide practical and emotional support wherever needed. We are hopeful for the best outcome going forward.



Police



Funded by the Police Federation of England and Wales, DMWS provide a comprehensive and professional welfare service to all officers who agree to be referred by their federation representative. Since the beginning of the programme in December 2020, DMWS have provided support to officers in a sympathetic and discrete manner to improve mental health and wellbeing and reduce the likelihood of requiring acute services.



292 direct service users;
27 family members



101 females and
191 males



Top issues supported:
mental health, general wellbeing, employment impact on wellbeing, lack of support, low self-esteem, under investigation, health impact on employment, family issues

“

I'm usually a closed book but DMWS helped me to become more open with other people in relation to the trauma I have been through. The Welfare Officer helped a lot with my anxiety and had good advice relating to my PTSD. He even supported me with other issues I was facing outside of work. I felt at ease talking to him and always looked forward to our check ins. Thank you for everything.

“

Without the help and support from the DMWS Welfare Officer I would not be here now. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

“

I cannot speak highly enough of the Welfare Officer. He provided me with a listening ear, reassurance and advice in my time of need and continued to do so as things improved for me. I cannot underestimate how much the service he provided helped me on my road to recovery. Thank you.



Exciting Collaborations

DMWS are proud to have led the Midlands Portfolio under the Veterans' Places, Pathways and People programme, funded by AFCFT, to support veterans' welfare and wellbeing.

This 2-year programme which began in November 2021 has been a pinnacle of collaborative working; the energy and drive to work together has been inspiring and we know that the networks, progress and impacts will be far reaching.

Working together we have shown we are more than our individual parts; helping veterans and their families navigate to the best support for them tackling issues such a

social isolation, loneliness, substance misuse and complex mental health issues.

Partners include: Fighting with Pride, Combat Stress, Veterans Community Network, Loughborough Wellbeing Centre LLR, Mission Motorsport, Stepway, The Poppy Factory, The Warrior Programme, Tri-Services & Veterans Support Centre, Waterloo Uncovered, and YSS.



 THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST

Project spotlight

Accessing hard to reach Scottish veterans

With thanks to the Office for Veterans' Affairs Veterans' Health Innovation Fund, DMWS were excited to be awarded funds to deliver welfare support with the help of technology to isolated veterans and family members/carers in Lanarkshire, Scotland.

DMWS will collaborate with NHS Lanarkshire and Technology Enabled Care to access hard-to-reach veterans and explore how combined welfare support with technology can reduce health inequalities across military communities. University of the West of Scotland will provide research to capture and analyse outcomes for future developments.

Supporting those who care

Being a carer related to the Armed Forces, whether still serving, a veteran or a reservist, brings unique challenges as well as the usual issues caring brings. Thanks to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and The Valentine Charitable Trust, DMWS are offering dedicated support to carers of the Armed Forces in Dorset.

The Valentine Charitable Trust

 THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST

Working for DMWS

**Our people make us what we are:
A high-quality, professional medical
welfare service provider.**

Nearly two thirds of DMWS staff are veterans, nearly a quarter are reservists, and nearly a third are spouses of serving personnel. This lived experience brings a profound empathy and understanding of the practical challenges of Service life and the nature of the communities we serve.

“

I am so proud and privileged to be a part of this fantastic organisation, which provides a unique and excellent service for such an important purpose, supporting the armed force community here in Cyprus!!

Demmie Savvides – spouse of Firefighter at British Base Dhekelia

“

I have just completed my first year with DMWS. I would like to say that I find the way we are supported, managed and allowed to find our own path is very refreshing. It has allowed me to grow in confidence as a person in the working environment.

Jo Hunt – spouse of RAF Serving 31 years



“

One of the reasons I am proud to work for DMWS is the social support that we provide to the military community, particularly where there are gaps in social events and a struggle to feel a sense of 'belonging' to a community. One of our service users is a Royal Navy veteran with Alzheimer's and our craft and chat group is his favourite group because he can speak with other veterans and serving personnel – he feels like he belongs again. His wife lets me know how much this group means to him, and her, and this makes you feel very proud that we are able to offer this support. I am proud to work for a charity that is made up of staff who truly care and will do all they can to improve the lives and situations for their service users.

Gemma Derbyshire – spouse of Royal Engineer Commando (Army) Serving 23 years

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

DMWS is committed to delivering a respectful and non-judgemental service to our beneficiaries, striving to create a culture of inclusion and respect in line with DMWS values – commitment, integrity, supporting people, and working together. As part of this commitment, we continue to explore how we can reach more marginalised individuals who need our support and how we can lead the way in breaking down barriers which may be compounding existing health inequalities.

Accreditations



Veterans Mental Health Awareness Standard



Fighting with Pride
– Pride in Veterans Standard

Awards

- Finalists in Soldiering On Awards: DMWS were proud to celebrate our Ministry of Defence Welfare Team who deal with incredibly complex and difficult situations across England, Northern Ireland and Cyprus.
- Finalists in Celebrating Forces Families: DMWS support many families in diverse and challenging scenarios and we were delighted to be recognised for this work.

Memberships



“

My confidence had been shattered by work pressures; the DMWS Welfare Officer helped me to see that PTSD isn't my fault and I am a person with valuable skills and a hopeful future...giving me courage to carry on fighting.

Thank you to our Funders and Partners

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust | Merchant Navy Welfare Board | Scottish Veterans Fund |
| Arborfield Old Boys Association | Ministry of Defence | The Eveson Trust |
| ABF The Soldiers' Charity | NHS Devon | The Dulverton Trust |
| Age Scotland | NHS Dorset | The Gosling Foundation |
| Alan Boswell Group Charitable Trust | NHS England | The Michael Marsh Charitable Trust |
| Army Central Fund | NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde | The National Lottery Community Fund |
| Baron Davenport's Charity | NHS Fife | The Robertson Trust |
| Bath University Hospital Trust | NHS Lanarkshire | The Royal British Legion |
| Boots Charitable Trust | NHS Lothian | The Valentine Charitable Trust |
| Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust | NHS Somerset | Veteran's Hub Weymouth |
| E F Bulmer Trust | Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust | Veterans' Foundation |
| G J W Turner Trust | Police Federation of England and Wales | |
| Hereford Community Foundation | Queen Mary's Roehampton Trust | |
| Hugh Fraser Foundation | RAF Benevolent Fund | |
| Imperial College Healthcare Trust | Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity | |
| | Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust | |





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Defence Medical Welfare Service

#supportingthefrontline

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