



IMPACT REPORT 2023

LUNCHEON
FOR PREVIEW
of
"SMITH"

In 1939 Veterans Aid launched its first social media film about a veteran called 'Smith'.

Programme

PATRON'S MESSAGE

My regular contact with staff at the Charity helps me understand the challenges they face daily and the sheer commitment they display in always making sure that veterans in greatest need get the support they deserve.

Every so often they tell me things which are truly extraordinary and should be applauded. One such noteworthy achievement which really caught my attention is mentioned below:

"In a three year period the charity delivered 40,602 nights of accommodation for veterans who had nowhere to go."

It is stunning to think that our Charity was capable of such an immense achievement and delivery of critical support in often difficult circumstances. By tackling the rise of homelessness head on, wherever possible, Veterans Aid is preventing veterans and their families from becoming street dwellers. Its focus on sustainable solutions is one of its key strengths and while the challenges it faces are difficult, they are rarely regarded as impossible!

All too frequently, staff are faced with situations which they believe should never have happened and they are rightly upset. Such a case is that of a Royal Navy veteran; a teacher who was forced to live in her car after being refused help in the military charity sector because she was earning too much. Within an hour our staff had booked her into a hotel and, four days later, arranged for her to move into a flat.

This is just one example of the work undertaken by Veterans Aid's staff and clearly illustrates why I am so very proud to be its Patron.



The Dowager Viscountess Rothermere
Patron, Veterans Aid

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27 Victoria Square, London SW1W 0RB | Telephone: 020 7828 2468 | Freephone: 0800 012 68 67
E-mail: info@veterans-aid.net | Website: www.veterans-aid.net | Twitter: @veteransaiduk
Facebook: @VeteransAid

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The production of this report causes me to look back and to look forward. Reflecting on what 2023 was like I have to say, it was hard... very hard.

The retrenchment of other charities in this sector saw our traffic increase by over 20%, which is a massive uptick in operations for any institution to handle. Did it break us? No, it did not - because our model works, and its scalability is one of the many strengths that VA has developed over the years.

Sadly, the move towards alleged 'efficiency' has resulted in many charities requiring prospective clients to apply for assistance online; not an easy task if you're living under a bush and you don't own a mobile phone!

Despite the challenges, Veterans Aid ended the year in a good place. Much progress continues to be made in our operations centre and at our residential facility. Our staff continue to be innovative in the way they successfully handle cases that other agencies have deemed 'impossible to resolve'. Our Patron, Lady Rothermere, rightly highlighted their frustration at the upsetting cases they are required to deal with - many of which were entirely preventable.

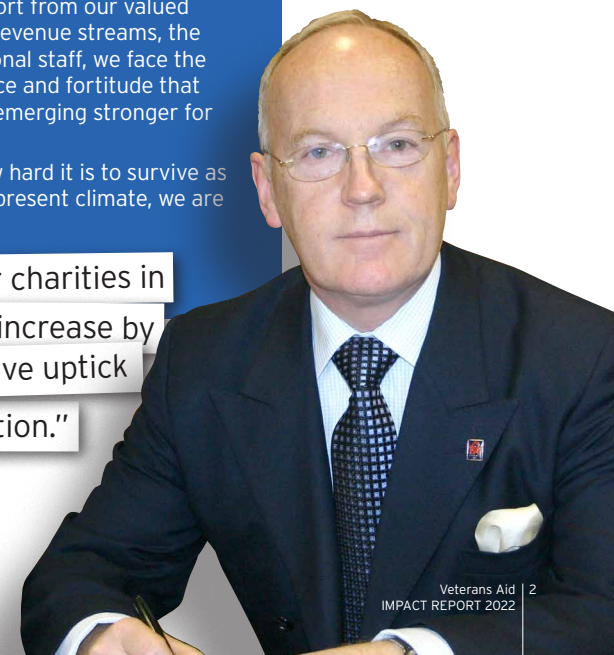
However, we started 2024 fit for purpose; our governance is tight, and our methodology regarded as exemplary. Thanks to the continued (and increasing) support from our valued benefactors, the diversification of our revenue streams, the dedication of our brilliant and professional staff, we face the year ahead with the mixture of resilience and fortitude that comes from being tested in battle and emerging stronger for the experience.

At Veterans Aid we know EXACTLY how hard it is to survive as a socially excluded veteran and, in the present climate, we are needed more than ever.

"The retrenchment of other charities in this sector saw our traffic increase by over 20%, which is a massive uptick in operations for any institution."



Andrew Wallis MBE ODL DL
Chairman, Veterans Aid



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE

Last year was challenging for the charity; difficult, primarily, because many organisations within the sector were not delivering (on many levels) the help required for those who needed it most.

However, it would be wrong to assume that we were victims of our own success. The increase in activity was, in part, directly related to the notable rise of process in the military charity sector.

Benevolence, in particular, has embraced this approach which, for those socially excluded veterans who seek our help, is now clearly out of synch with life in Britain today. Put simply, processes are too long, and sums given simply do not take account of the economic crisis. Delay is often a critical factor. We frequently try to overcome this, but the heavily bureaucratic charities often say that they won't help unless their ponderous processes are followed. My reaction to this is that we rarely have the luxury of time. I would argue that by embracing process to the exclusion of any other way of accessing funds, is fundamentally a backwards step when the context dictates that we should be

removing the barriers that delay delivery of help to those most in need. The upshot is delivery of only short-term solutions; 'quick fixes' that inevitably create downstream difficulties and are totally inappropriate for addressing the complex problems that veterans present to us daily. For many of our clients the system isn't working. Sadly, I am of the view that we won't see the changes in the sector that are so badly needed until veterans are put before process. Thankfully, many years ago, we realised that reliance on restricted fund benevolence would lead to single-point failure. Accordingly, through diversification of income streams and wide collaboration, we have both guaranteed our stability and ensured continuity of effective service delivery.

The freedom to act without the restriction of ringfenced funding is critical. I am often asked why, and how, it affects what we do. The answer is that we simply don't know what is needed until our clients tell us.

I'm often told that VA does not collaborate - which couldn't be further from the truth. We typically interact with around 70 agencies a week - but based on the needs of clients, not at the direction of outside agencies! So, we end the year in a strong

position which, in the current state of the charity world, is unusual. Our impact continues to be direct and effective.

In the past three years we have delivered over 40,000 nights of accommodation. Our Welfare to Wellbeing® (W2WB®) model is increasingly being acknowledged for its effectiveness and, in recognition of this, we received the 2023 World Veterans Federation Award for Veteran Rehabilitation. Visitors continue to call and reach out to us from around the globe. They come to learn. Vasey RSL, in Australia, has taken our model to develop an innovative centre which is attracting great interest.

Our wonderful backers, such as The Michael Uren Foundation, continue to believe in our methods, for which we are truly indebted. The staff, in our superb New Belvedere House and in the HQ, continue to deliver an exemplary service which has been enhanced by Mr Paul Ellis who volunteered to help us further develop relationships with our support Police Services across the country. Everyone who visits is stunned by our staff's focus and sheer determination to alleviate distress and poverty among our clients. Their practical compassion and ability to see clients' problems in the round enables them to deal with the challenges of complex and multiple issues effectively. This rare ability has much to do with our high success rate.

In sum, by diligent planning and sheer dedication, Veterans Aid has landed firmly on the national stage as the name to call when a veteran is in crisis. As ever, I look forward to a day when we are no longer needed, but with poverty on the increase and an uncertain future facing us all, now is not that time. Indeed, I fear that the need for our services will only increase dramatically in the months ahead.

"For many of our clients the system isn't working.

Sadly, I am of the view that we won't see the

changes in the sector that are so badly needed until

veterans are put before process."

Wing Commander
Dr Hugh Milroy OBE PhD
CEO, Veterans Aid

Hon Professor of Social Work (UEA)
Head of Wellbeing, World Veterans Association



COMPLEX PATHWAYS

Between 1st October 2022 and 30th September 2023, Veterans Aid and our dedicated Ops Team recorded 2,858 client interactions (an increase of nearly 40%). We listened, unpicked, advised and provided practical help for those in crisis.

Data gathering is a necessary exercise; one that we are constantly refining - but numbers can never capture the quality of care provided; the diversity of needs met, or the longevity of outcomes achieved. Nevertheless, increases in demand for every kind of crisis support tell a story - and it's not a happy one.

Our youngest client last year was an 18 year-old Army veteran; the oldest a former airman aged 86. The age of the 'average' client was 45.

Over 60% were in poverty, with all its concomitant problems - low income jobs, mental health struggles, substance misuse, gambling, family breakdowns and social isolation.

Housing Status of new clients	
78%	At risk*
21%	Rough sleeper (+4% Increase)
1%	Homeless abroad
At risk* In detail	
34%	Life circumstances
20%	Sofa surfing (+5% Increase)
12%	Temporary accommodation (+6% Increase)
7%	Sleeping in a car (+2% Increase)
4%	Tied accommodation
1%	Prison discharge
Where they came from	
34%	Referral from a military charity
33%	Internet
12%	Word of mouth
11%	Referral from non-military charity
8%	Other
2%	Police referral
Reason for Contact	
63%	Poverty - 60% were in employment (+ 10% Increase)
45%	Struggling with two plus issues

WHY MONEY MATTERS

We never turn away ex-servicemen and women in distress but the cost of carrying out our work has risen alarmingly at a time when demand has never been greater.

This publication will hopefully bring our statistics to life and explain how our steady 90% success rate in turning lives around is sustained. It is delivered, in part, by commitment to a successful model (Welfare to Wellbeing®) and an understanding that traditional benevolence is no longer an effective way of dealing with social need.

But it is equally reliant on donors who understand that while ad hoc donations are always welcome, the real key to fast, effective delivery of support is access to unallocated, multi-year support - because we never know what a client needs until s/he asks for help.

The average cost per night of crisis accommodation in 2023 increased by 5%. Individual move-on costs rose to £3,500 per client.

The perception of VA as a charity focused on homelessness has long been out of step with reality and the costs associated with providing short/long term accommodation represent just a fraction of its annual outlay.

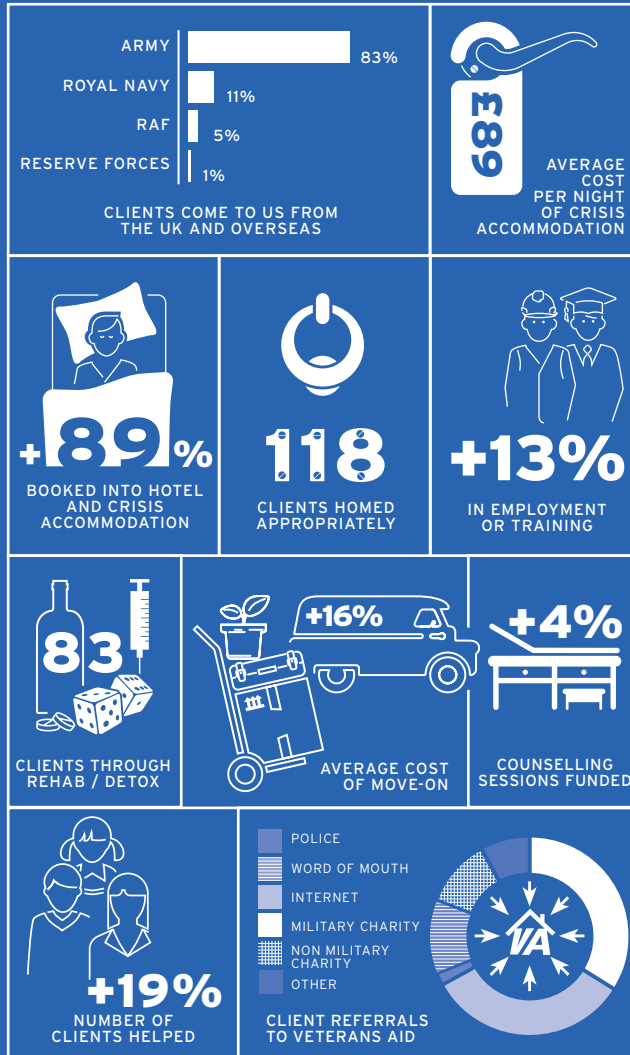
We also deal with gambling, drug, alcohol, and other addictions and last year invested in counselling and detox support for 83 veterans. We have always provided a pathway into employment for those reaching the end of their wellbeing journey - 76 last year alone. Ironically many of last year's 380 new clients had jobs and were members of the working poor.

"We also deal with gambling, drug, alcohol and other addictions and last year invested in counselling and detox support for 83 veterans."



Veterans Aid has spent £119,720 on crisis accommodation and hotels over the last three years.

OUR YEAR IN FIGURES



SEBASTIAN'S JOURNEY

Sebastian's journey, described on the following pages, is not untypical for a VA client. Getting him on his feet took three years and four months and cost nearly £12.5k.

It also took weeks of patient listening, questioning, reassurance, and expert help. The charity's investment in Sebastian has paid off; he is now free of his drug/alcohol addiction, employed and enjoying an independence that once seemed impossible.

But Sebastian's transformation could not have been achieved through traditional benevolence, or the kind of single-issue, handout culture that restricts support to short-term interventions, offered under strict conditions. Indeed, the process delays built into these applications introduce further risk to individuals already vulnerable.

Sebastian was a mess when he first contacted VA - with more problems than even he realised. He was on bail - homeless, chaotic, confused, and addicted.

The interventions that VA funded to ensure that Sebastian's wellbeing journey ended in success were diverse. We paid for crisis hotel accommodation, travel, COVID tests, rehab/ detox, carpets, household, and white goods. We arranged for him to receive medical attention and, when appropriate, accommodated him in our own flagship facility, New Belvedere House.

This unique and outstanding facility (pictured) provided Sebastian with a home; a place where he received wraparound support from people who cared. When he was ready to move on, we secured decent accommodation for him and helped to furnish it.



SEBASTIAN'S JOURNEY

The public value of VA's interventions on

Sebastian's behalf represent savings amounting to £85,504.50[†]

- † Saving to the taxpayer - The public value of VA's interventions on Sebastian's behalf can be represented in fiscal, economic, and social value terms. Using metrics employed as part of Pro Bono Economics' independent audit of VA's work, and applying the same formula, these savings amount to £85,504.50
- * VA's direct cost - We received just £3k from 'benevolent organisations' towards Sebastian's transformation - barely a quarter of the amount required to assist with his recovery.

...IN HIS OWN WORDS

"When I go home now, I start smiling as I walk up the stairs"

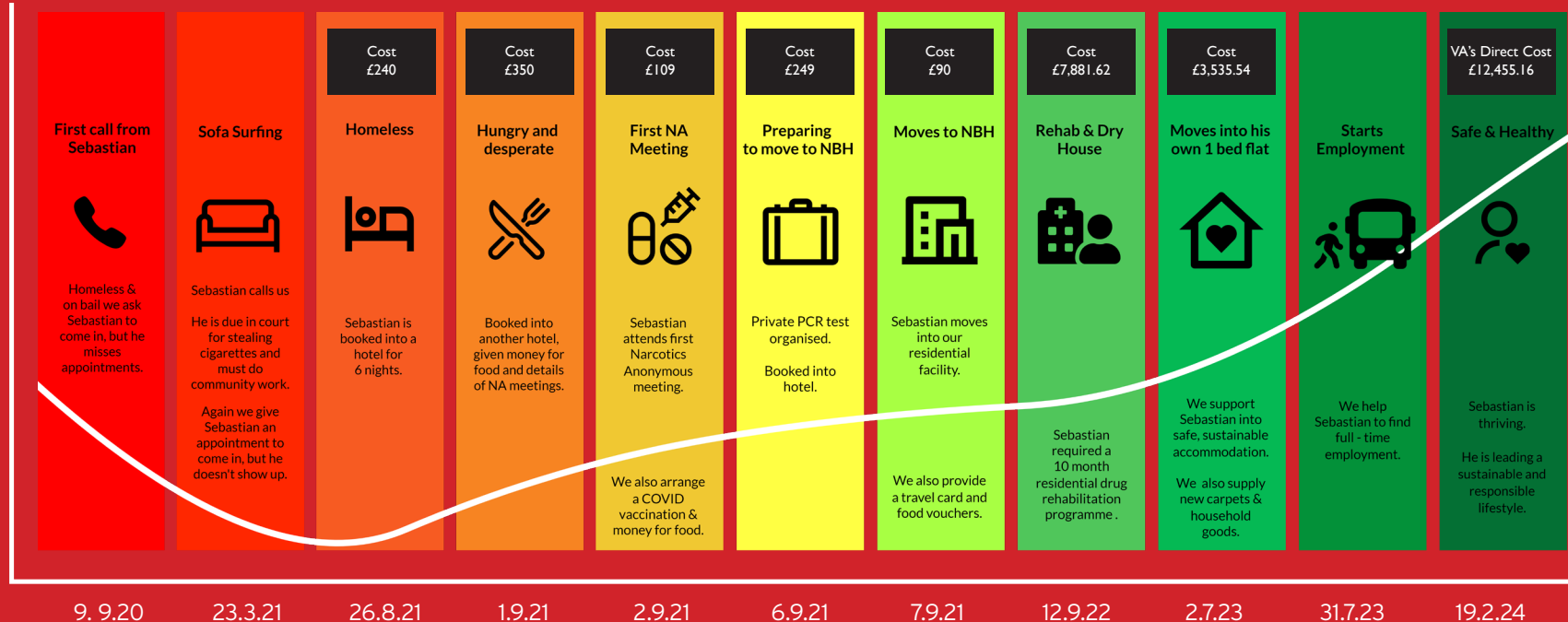
'Sebastian' is not his real name - but the words that follow are his own. They describe a chaotic journey from childhood to early middle age, which featured military service (four years with 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment), drugs, a suicide attempt, crime, jail and homelessness. Reflecting on the years that preceded his arrival at Veterans Aid, Sebastian marvels that he survived. Now 44, clean, employed and living independently in West London, he recalls a relationship with heroin that

he likens to "dancing with the devil".

He joined the Army at 17, loved it and was soon promoted to L/Cpl, but was discharged at 21 after failing a drugs test. The years that followed were a blur of crack dens, crime and confusion until he rang the doorbell at VA. These are his reflections on how he got there - and what happened afterwards:

"I'd just sort of lost my way. I'd grown further and further away from the person I always wanted to be..."

WELLBEING & RESILIENCE



Veterans Aid's Ops Team dealt with 6,794 client enquiries over the last three years.

SEBASTIAN'S JOURNEY

I thought, how did I get here? I've been a soldier, a responsible friend and, all of a sudden, I've become nothing... it was a vicious circle of 'get up and use, get up and use', stealing to get money for drugs. I couldn't pull myself out of the slump and felt very pathetic as a human being."

When did things start getting better?

"The very first day I came here! (To VA). I remember getting here and it was pretty cold outside. I was in the reception room downstairs, and it was warm and I just dozed off. Then one of the staff came down... and I jumped out of my seat and he said "Don't worry, everything's going to be alright" - and I just broke down."

"Soon after I was sent to see a doctor and they put me on subutex, for the heroin, then they (VA) gave me some food vouchers and directions to the hotel that they had paid for... before I got to that door, I was in survival mode. It's like I was behind enemy lines, and I had to get somewhere safe and I was heading for HQ."

After five days in a hotel Sebastian moved into New Belvedere House.

"As soon as I walked in, I felt safe. It was clean - there were warm, smiling faces. It felt like home, and I hadn't had anywhere to call home since a very young age. It was nice to be among ex-servicemen as well and, as the days unfolded, I felt happy - great and grateful to be there. I'd no bank account at that time, nothing but clothes in a bag... I didn't really exist in the system so to speak."

It wasn't plain sailing and Sebastian had several relapses before getting clean and starting rehab.

"I felt ashamed because all these people had

helped me... I knew that staff at NBH were worried about me. I was in a really dark place one day until a member of staff said something to me and I put my hand up and asked for help. Within five days I was off to rehab... but leaving New Belvedere House broke my heart. I went back a few weeks later to apologise, but there was no judgement - they just said, 'It's all right, we know there's a decent person inside you; we just want you to get well.' I wanted to go back but they said, 'We don't want you to come back, we want you to go forward! March on!' "

He was urged to go to meetings with other users but was sceptical about their value. He spent 17 weeks at a stabilisation unit, doing "A lot of offloading, about childhood traumas and things".

"Sometime to go forwards you've got to go backwards; there was a lot of stuff I didn't want to talk about. Before I went to rehab a staff member suggested I go to a meeting, but I didn't really want to. I thought I'd better in case they checked up on me - it was near a place where I used to score and I thought, I'll go to the meeting then... but people spoke up and I thought, yes, I recognise that, and I spoke up too. That was the first time ever that I wanted to take drugs, but I didn't. I met some good people and even if I don't see them, I know that they are there. And that was all because of Veterans Aid."

Although Sebastian wanted to go back to NBH he knew it wasn't a move in the right direction and accepted that he needed time in a 'move on' house.

"The paperwork for a property of my own had been in progress since I first went to NBH. Eventually when I felt I had enough in

the 'emotional bank' to say 'no' (to drugs) I made a phone call and said that if anything came available, I'd be very interested. Three days later I got a call saying someone had pulled out of a place - did I want to come and look?"

Soon afterwards, Sebastian got another call - offering him a job. It was crunch time - he had to make "two big decisions" in one day.

"It was a lot to take on and I started doubting myself. It was a bit overwhelming, a big responsibility... and I felt that I owed VA bigtime - for paying for rehab, for giving me that second chance, for getting me clean - again! - for giving me somewhere to live. Then I thought, this is like a chance for me to justify their faith in me."

But VA's help didn't end there...

"It kept on coming, they said here's a voucher to get some furniture a washing machine, we'll get carpets fitted, get help from your old regiment... and I thought 'When does this stop?' I felt guilty - but the feeling that I was just taking and not giving ended when I started working and helping others. It's been quite a journey."

"I've got a lovely job, a lovely place to live. I've started to build a life - and I now have two bank accounts! There isn't much money in them, but I've come a long way from the time when I couldn't even get a bank account! I always wanted a motorbike and now I've got one - I've met someone; my whole life has opened up, and - I'll be honest, I'm scared s*****s, but in such a good way! Looking back, I was ashamed - I was a far cry from the soldier I used to be and the man I aspired to be... but now I'm in a good place. It's not easy and, in some ways, it is still a daily battle, but on whole I am just so grateful to Veterans Aid."

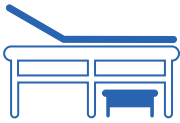
Sebastian was at rock bottom when he came to 27 Victoria Square and rang the bell at VA.

"I'm stable now and in a good place, but if it hadn't worked out for me when I walked through that door, I think I'd have chucked myself off Tower Bridge. That's the stage I was at."

"My whole life has opened up, and - I'll be honest, I'm scared s*****s, but in such a good way!"



Veterans Aid has helped
169 clients
with addictions
in the last three years.



Veterans Aid has spent £436,490 on treatments and counselling over the last three years.

GAMBLING

Gambling is not a problem that many people would associate with a veterans' charity, but VA is no ordinary veterans' charity!

How many veterans gamble? Surely, it's not a big issue? The fact is that no-one really knows, because gamblers are notoriously secretive. According to the latest Public Health England report on gambling, 0.5% of the population (approximately 246,000 people) are problem gamblers, and 3.8% (2.2 million people) are 'at-risk' gamblers.

There are around 1.6m veterans in the UK, but almost everyone in the country knows, or is related to, a former member of the Armed Forces. Often those we help at Veterans Aid are part of that 'extended family' - the partners, children, friends, and loved ones of an ex-serviceman or woman struggling with the life-ruining mental disorder that is dismissed as a 'gambling addiction'.

Every VA client's journey towards crisis is unique; as unique as its person-centric support system - a non-judgmental pathway from Welfare to Wellbeing®. Our highly trained and experienced staff understand that many clients present with co-morbidities so the act of unpacking and exploring is key to identifying and addressing underlying problems. One of our clients, a former soldier, gambled away £100,000 in a month before seeking VA's help. Others - sometimes in denial about even having a problem - lose smaller amounts, on a regular basis, hiding the mounting debt from their families until rage, shame, and sometimes violence leads to homelessness, relationship breakdown, crime and thoughts of suicide.

The support VA provides is comprehensive, and from the moment a client seeks help the burden lifts, because s/he knows that they are no longer alone.

In real terms, VA is a social care organisation; a wraparound service that addresses individuals holistically, unpacking and treating problems as they emerge until they no longer inhibit independence and wellbeing.

Uniquely among ex-service charities VA partners with force-multiplying organisations that help its staff to identify problems, address addictions and provide tailored support to work through them.

In addition to its own specialists VA has established relationships with providers of advice, counselling, and rehab - significantly GambleAware and Gamcare, which is part of the National Gambling Support Network.

'DANIEL' is a Reservist in his 40s who was referred to VA by his Regimental Association for support with gambling and alcohol problems. He had been arrested for stealing £10,000 from his mother which he had gambled away. He was in limbo, waiting for a court appearance when he was referred to VA. When the charity made contact, 'Daniel' was suicidal, it took a significant investment of time and money to get him back on his feet, but 'Daniel' is now sober and has not gambled since contacting VA on 03/11/2023.

'SAMMY', a former soldier in his 40s, had a good job when he came to VA and a sympathetic employer. But when debts and patience ran out, his family and friends said 'enough' and he found himself homeless. It was a humiliating experience for a former Warrant Officer with 22 years' service.

VA immediately organised accommodation for him, counselling, rehab at the specialist Gordon Moody Centre and a range of other measures geared towards helping this proud father re-establish links with his family.

This work is only possible because of multiple year partnerships that guarantee funding for unexpected and largely invisible issues; problems not traditionally or obviously associated with veterans.

Collaboration with invested partners is a two way street that is constantly evolving. As more supportive partners come on board, the advantages of working with visionary social care organisations like Veterans Aid increase - saving money, distress - and, in some cases, lives.

"According to the latest Public Health England report on gambling, 0.5% of the population (approximately 246,000 people) are problem gamblers, and 3.8% (2.2 million people) are 'at-risk' gamblers."

SUPPORTERS

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The achievements of Veterans Aid would not be possible without the support of its friends and donors. As ever we extend our heartfelt gratitude to them for their generosity, compassion and understanding. Thankfully there are now too many to name individually - and some prefer to remain anonymous - but a few are represented here. The past year was challenging but we continued to operate and thrive thanks to the faith of those who made unallocated funds available to us - confident in the knowledge that we would spend wisely to help those most in need.

THE MICHAEL UREN FOUNDATION



POLICE PARTNERSHIPS

Veterans Aid believes that replication is a waste of time and money. With a view to saving both, the Charity has forged partnerships with organisations whose reach and infrastructure enable speedier identification of veterans who need help - and faster delivery of support.



Veterans Aid was the only charity invited to the inaugural meeting of the City of London Corporation/City of London Police Veterans/Reservists Association.

Key force multipliers in this respect are police officers and in 2022 Veterans Aid saw its vision to deliver prevention through partnership become a reality through a scheme aimed at helping police officers to better assist veterans when - for whatever reason - they interacted.

The Charity's frontline team - which includes a dedicated Criminal Justice Outreach Officer - has been hosting familiarisation visits with police officers and aspiring officers since 2019 when Police NOW visitors first spent time in its Operations Centre.

Four years later CEO of Veterans Aid Dr Hugh Milroy and Chief Constable Chris Noble signed the agreement that made Staffordshire the latest UK police force to establish formal links with the charity.

In addition to enabling police officers get direct help to identify and arrange support for veterans they come across in the course of their duties, the partnerships enable veterans serving in the various police services to access help.

Training too is a key part of the collaboration and participating police services have been benefiting from awareness raising visits from VA staff for some time.



ST. BOTOLPH-WITHOUT-BISHOPSGATE

St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate and Veterans Aid enjoy a unique relationship. It is epitomised by the William Hogarth etching of the parable of the Good Samaritan that stands at the rear of the church. An accompanying plaque reads:

"A gift to St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate from our friends at Veterans Aid as a symbol of our partnership, and shared desire to alleviate homelessness, serve those who have served us, and work for the good of humanity. Presented and consecrated at a service in the church on 4 October 2022 to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Veterans Aid."

The choice of the Good Samaritan to be a permanent reminder, in St Botolph's, of the church's link with Veterans Aid could not be more apt. It emphasises the values and approach to service that the church and the charity share. These values are acknowledged in the Veterans Aid prayer written by the Rector of St Botolph's and chaplain to Veterans Aid, Fr David Armstrong.

THE VETERANS AID PRAYER

Lord, bless and strengthen the work of Veterans Aid that it may, with humility and strength, serve those who first served us.

Help us restore dignity, respect and well-being where there is shame, doubt and hurt.

Make us ever vigilant to the needs of our veterans and ever active in our care.

Pour into our hearts that love for all humanity that we may ever see the need for aid and hear the voices which go unheard.

Hold in your hands and bless, good Lord, all servicemen and women with no place to call home.

Sustain and nurture those who come in from the street and bless all those who serve in the service of Veterans Aid.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen



NEW BELVEDERE HOUSE

There are hostels for the homeless and there is New Belvedere House - a residential facility like no other.

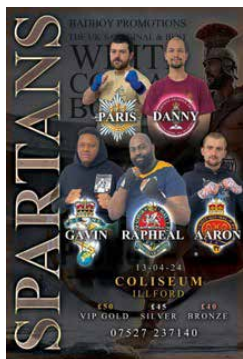
By utilising the skills of top designers Oliver Burns - whose mantra is 'thoughtful luxury' - and melding them with practical assets like a training gym, kitchen and computer suite, NBH offers an aspirational environment in which veterans who have succumbed to adversity can heal and flourish.

Every aspect of this unusual accommodation has been designed to support recovery - from the welcoming reception area to the shared public indoor and outdoor spaces.

Uniquely it is a facility designed around delivery of a process - the Welfare to Wellbeing® pathway that guides veterans from dependence and social isolation towards empowerment and independence.

Each of NBH's 66 residents has a key worker dedicated to addressing their personal needs, and a typical stay is around nine months.

When residents are ready to move on, they do so secure in the knowledge that they have a support network to fall back on, safe, clean accommodation to move into and (where appropriate) a job. NBH enjoys a 90% success rate and, over the years, has transformed thousands of veterans' lives.



Photographer: Alice Sharpe



BOXING CLEVER

Fitness is high on the agenda at New Belvedere House where a fully equipped professional standard gym is available for residents who want to train or get fit.

Morning training sessions have been part of daily life at NBH since long before its 2018 refurbishment - set up and attended by key staff they provide an incentive to get out of bed, generate some positive energy and start the day feeling good.

In addition to structured one hour morning sessions, residents can use the gym individually or in groups. Those who are good enough, and want to take their boxing further, are offered 12 weeks' free training at Bad Boy - the home of White Collar Boxing.

NBH team 'The Spartans' - comprising residents Paris, Danny, Gavin, Raphael, Aaron, and Antony - is one of many that

has reached the requisite standard to sell tickets for an event where they will take on other fighters.

Ahead of their April 2024 event at Ilford Coliseum they had this to say:

"To be honest it has helped me to be a lot more socially interactive and integrate with people from a different mindset. It has also helped me to avoid going back to the routine of isolation. It has given me a goal to work for and encouraging comments from staff have helped my motivation and self-esteem." - Raphael

"I decided to take part in the boxing mainly for the fitness. It's also great to represent VA in the squared circle! I'm looking forward to a great night of boxing and I'm very excited to be taking part." - Paris

"Going to the Bad Boy Gym has been a highlight of my time here at New Belvedere House. It's helped me meet new people. It's helped with my social interaction; it's helped build my personal self-esteem back up again; it's helped with my fitness and most importantly it's helped my mental health." - Gavin



'Social media' is a term that wasn't in use when VA was founded, 92 years ago. There was no Facebook, Tik Tok, Instagram or LinkedIn where friends of the charity could post news or look at bite-sized pieces of information showcasing its activities. The Marconiphone model 709 TV (pictured) was probably released in 1938, but in 1939, when war was declared, television broadcasts were discontinued, and sets could only be used for their radios.

After a House of Commons launch for a stellar cast of film, media, literary, political, and other notables, the film was due to go on release around the UK, to be screened at the many Gaumont Cinemas that were the nation's main source of news and entertainment in the 1930s.

Due to the advent of war however, this amazing promotional film - made 'at cost' for £400 by actors and production staff who waived their fees - was never screened and was lost to posterity for many years. Rumours circulated about a 'missing Michael Powell film' but most people didn't even know that it existed. It wasn't included in any filmography of Powell, and he only refers to it briefly and obscurely in his autobiography.

The film resurfaced in 2003 through the detective work of an enthusiast who approached EFC/VA for information. A search at our Head Office revealed the original canister and fragile nitrate film, in a storeroom. It was immediately taken by taxi to BFI where a safety print was made.

Smith, the eponymous star of the film, represented all the veterans in distress who

The 1939 Luncheon Programme for the preview said:

Eighty-five years later Veterans Aid uses more modern social media channels to 'reach the masses'. Its Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn platforms are growing in popularity with users who favour digital interaction. Last year recorded an increase in Facebook and Instagram interaction of 86%, although Linked In continues to attract our widest audience.

The communication channels have changed but, as ever, the VA message remains constant. Even 85 years ago the charity understood that as a national organisation with no recourse to local support, and no inclination to spend large amounts on publicity, it had to box clever. Its work clearly inspired the makers of, and participants in, Smith!

The film was intended to target the captive cinema audiences of the day in the only place where they could 'see and hear' about its work. It was truly the 'social medium' of its day.

The story of Smith and links to our modern social media channels can be found on the VA website where the film is hosted for anyone interested in watching it. Its message of hope is as valid now as it was all those years ago.



You may wonder why this film has been made! -

The reasons are comparatively simple. Firstly, it is no longer possible to expect great gifts from the rich: for the simple reason that the rich themselves have now become very few in number. Furthermore, the Enbankment Fellowship Centre is not an old-established undertaking with long years of tradition and a lengthy list of regular supporters and subscribers. It does not stand in the midst of a busy centre where its very existence challenges the bystander—as does the great hospital. As to those whose first sympathies have (quite naturally) been evoked by some local undertaking.

A WIDESPREAD APPEAL FOR SMALLER GIFTS IS, on the other hand, a most costly affair. Bringing one's cause adequately to the notice of, and among, the rich is the "better-off" appeal may well cost more—and our film cost less than half that total.

—APPEAL TO THE MASSES, and such an appeal can bring one's cause to the notice of the people in a way of the pound to create a staggering



ENDORSEMENTS



'Alice' was referred to Veterans Aid by Recruit for Spouses, one of the many like-minded organisations that works closely with the charity to support veterans trying to get back on their feet and into the workplace.

"Veterans Aid have been unbelievably kind, helpful, thoughtful and supportive. They made things very welcoming and safe from the moment I first spoke with them. I can't tell you what a huge relief it was to be met with such decent and friendly people. I'm blown away and very grateful for them taking the time to talk to me."

"After they confirmed that they would cover the cost of accommodation and fuel for my training course I spent a day getting everything booked and in order."

"I'm still a bit in shock if I'm being honest. I really did think that after the constant blocks, dead ends, and aggressive, highly invasive, and abusive responses I've had from the major service charities, that I'd have to cancel it, which was devastating. Knowing I can access this safe exit and

have a complete fresh start in every area of life again hasn't quite sunk yet. I will absolutely make sure I get these licences and get cracking with everything."

"Words don't really cover the gratitude I have. Your help has meant I can access all the basics again and no longer be subjected to the abusive systems and poverty traps that have blocked me for such a very long time. With huge thanks."

'Alice' - Veterans Aid Client

EUROMIL, the European Organisation of Military Associations and Trade Unions, is the voice of European soldiers on an international level. Its core mission is to promote the professional and social interests as well as the fundamental rights and freedoms of European soldiers.

"EUROMIL was interested to learn about the successful methodology used by Veterans Aid, in particular its Welfare to Wellbeing® (W2WB®) model, believing that the armed forces have a duty to care for their employees."

"Mental health problems can occur years after military service has ended. EUROMIL is of the opinion that caring for its personnel, even after retirement, is a key task of the armed forces. However, we know from experience that governments do not take on these tasks or make sufficient resources available for them. That is why there is a need for organisations such as Veterans Aid to use their experience and expertise for the Veterans community." Emmanuel Jacob, President of EUROMIL - Visitor



The V Centre

"Our partnership with our friends from the UK, particularly in learning from the New Belvedere House model, has been transformative. The guidance and expertise provided by Hugh Milroy has been instrumental in the development of the V Centre."

"Drawing from the rich experience and impressive results of the New Belvedere House model, we have opened doors to a new era of transitional housing for veterans"

"This collaboration has not only enriched our project but has also laid the foundation for ongoing learning and growth. We extend our heartfelt thanks and look forward to continued partnership and shared successes. Just two months into the life of the V Centre, we can already witness its positive impact on the lives of veterans."

Janna Voloshin (CEO Vasey RSL Care) and
Chris Gray (GM Veteran Services Vasey RSL Care), Australia.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Financial Summary for the year ended 30th September 2023

Income **£1,916,088** (2022: £1,614,054)

	2023 £	2022 £
Donations & Legacies	657,153	616,506
Local Authority payments	837,981	495,200
Charges to NBH residents	66,614	45,031
Donations in Kind	37,689	40,580
Grants	262,885	375,695
Fundraising & Sundry	25,860	13,558
Investment Income	27,905	27,484
	£1,916,088	£1,614,054

Expenditure **£1,993,866** (2022: £1,871,332)

	2023 £	2022 £
New Belvedere House (NBH)	843,180	804,953
Operations Centre	997,401	912,969
Fundraising & Events	153,285	153,410
	£1,993,866	£1,871,332

Net increase (decrease) in funds	(77,778)	(257,278)
Net gain (loss) on investments	55,333	(52,911)
Pension scheme actuarial (loss) gain	(225)	17,700
Revaluation of freehold property	1,420,795	-
Total movement in funds	£1,398,125	(£292,489)

Reserves	Balances at 30th Sept 2023 £	Movement in year £	
<i>Capital Funds</i>			
Hollenden Endowment Reserve	2,640,000	127,947	Permanent Endowment Reserve
Restricted Funds	6,160,000	1,184,689	New Belvedere House Reserve
	8,800,000	1,312,636	<i>The increase is due to a professional revaluation of the freehold premises at New Belvedere House and the write-back of depreciation on the buildings</i>
<i>Revenue Funds</i>			
Restricted Funds	13,335	(39,307)	Funds donated for specific activities
General Reserve (Unrestricted Funds)	1,204,915	124,795	
	1,218,250	85,489	<i>Represents an estimated seven months average operating costs</i>
Total Funds	£10,018,250	£1,398,125	

Trustees' statement

This financial summary has been prepared to illustrate the main areas of ongoing expenditure by Veterans Aid, the principal sources of its income and the funds available.

The Board of Trustees confirms that this financial summary is taken from the draft accounts for the year and is subject to audit. The summary does not contain all the information necessary to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of Veterans Aid. Copies of the full accounts, once the audit is complete, will be filed with the Charity Commission and may be obtained from: Veterans Aid, 27 Victoria Square, London, SW1W 0RB.

Signed



Col Christopher MacKenzie-Beevor CBE LVO, Honorary Treasurer



TRUSTEES AND OPERATIONAL STAFF

Patron

The Dowager Viscountess Rothermere

Honorary Life President

Brigadier Johnny Rickett CBE FlntSD

Honorary Vice President

Field Marshal the Lord Walker of Aldringham GCB CMG CBE DL (retired as active trustee on 27 April 2023)

Chairman

Mr Andrew Wallis MBE OL DL
Honorary Colonel for Beds & Herts ACF

Deputy Chairman & Governance Advisor

Dr Paul Dyer BA (Hons) MA DUniv (Kent)
FBIPP FIOD ACII

Trustees

Honorary Treasurer Col Christopher MacKenzie-Beevor CBE LVO

Mr Gilbert Holbourn FCA FCCA DchA

Advisors

Honorary Psychiatric Advisor Lt Col Ian Palmer, Professor of Military Psychiatry

Principal HR Advisor

Ms Amanda Lennon Solicitor (England & Wales) FCIPD LLB (Hons)

Media & Communications Advisor
Ms Glyn Strong BA, MA, PGCE, MCIPR, MCIJ

Finance & Legal

Legal Advisors - Spencer West LLP

Auditors - Saffery LLP,
Chartered Accountants

Investment Managers & Stockbrokers
S&T Asset Management LLP

Bankers - Clydesdale Bank, HSBC Bank,
Lloyds Bank

HQ & Operations Centre

CEO Wing Commander Dr Hugh Milroy OBE
BTh MA PhD DCL (h.c.) Hon Prof of Social Work UEA; Head of Wellbeing, World Veterans Federation

Chief of Staff Ms Natalia Dabrowska
BA MSc CG (Affiliated)

Support Services Manager

Ms Marianna Prota MA MIWFM /
Ms Micha Todd BA (Hons) maternity cover

Head of Financial Services

Mr Richard Greenhough B.Com ACMA

Finance Assistant Ms Chu Yon Cho BA

Digital Media Officer Ms Hayley Lewis

Events & Development Officer
Major Delia Holdom BSc (Open)

Head of Fundraising Ms Dorothy Jones
Dip Eng Law (Open) MCIM MCIOF

Fundraising Consultant Ms Delia Blaj BA

Ops Team

Head of Frontline Operations
Mr John Boyle Dip SW

Operations Staff Ms Debbie Brown,
Ms Tamika Brandon-Thynne

Head of Wellbeing & Addiction Services
Mr Phil Rogers BA

Wellbeing & Addiction Support Officer
Mr Richard Withers

Volunteers

Criminal Justice Outreach Mr Paul Ellis

Facilities Support - Mr Shaun Cairns,
Mr Paul Conner

New Belvedere House

NBH Manager Ms Pat O'Connor MBE

Deputy Manager Mr Dennis Murphy

Assistant Managers Mr Paul Dickson,
Mr Peter Fanning, Mr Andrew Gray,
Mr Marc Halligan, Mr Ian Hamlet, Ms Lesley MacDonald, Mr Denroy Roberts, Mr John Ward, Ms Anna Waylen

IT, Cyber Security & Data Protection
Support & Advisor Electron IT

Facilities Management
Blackmoor Knight Ltd

HR and Health & Safety Support Citation

Health & Safety Advisor
Ian Marlow Safety Services

WE DELIVERED:



40,602

**NIGHTS OF
ACCOMMODATION
IN 3 YEARS.**

(MARCH 2021 - MARCH 2024)



VETERANS AID • 27 VICTORIA SQUARE • LONDON • SW1W 0RB

Telephone: 020 7828 2468

Freephone: 0800 012 68 67

E-mail: info@veterans-aid.net

Web: www.veterans-aid.net

Twitter: @veteransaiduk

Facebook: @VeteransAid

Registered charity: 1095308 Charitable Company Limited by guarantee no. 4544532
Veterans Aid is a member of The World Veterans Federation (WVF) and Confederation of Service Charities (COBSEO)