



# ALWAYS THERE FOR OUR ARMED FORCES FAMILY

IMPACT REPORT 2019/20



**ssafa** | the  
Armed Forces  
charity

[ssafa.org.uk](http://ssafa.org.uk)

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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Reflecting on 2019, we should all be very proud of the positive impact we've had on the lives of thousands of our beneficiaries. The SSAFA family – our volunteers, employees and service delivery partners – has pulled together to provide life-changing support to the Armed Forces community.

With our range of complementary services in the UK and overseas, we helped 85,616 people in 2019 and sourced £12.6 million\* to support those who needed it most. Thanks must go to our 5,201 volunteers, the heart and soul of what we do. Collaboration is key to what we deliver and SSAFA works with more than 120 different military organisations and many other foundations to enable us to help those in need. We rely on our volunteers, their dedication and their expertise, to help us give long-term, personal support to those who need our assistance.

People continue to come to us with more complicated issues, many centred around mental wellbeing, often impacting their physical health, leading to financial difficulties. These require more resources and time from our teams, as illustrated by the case studies in this report. Thanks to those who have shared their stories, which illustrates just how much our volunteers do.

Every year we hear from ex-service personnel who are simply struggling to adjust to civilian life. In response, our mentoring service is growing and now we have 180 mentors working directly with service leavers. In 2019, 385 individuals and their families were supported through their transition, empowering them to get the most out of life after service in the military.

Forcesline again experienced an increase in the number of requests, with our advisors dealing with 29,930 enquiries. These came from serving personnel, veterans and their families who need assistance and guidance; from homelessness and relationship difficulties, to addiction and accessing welfare benefits.

We also embraced new forms of technology to reach younger beneficiaries. In the first three months of 2019, we found only 8% of our Forcesline calls were made by someone under the age of 30. So in October 2019, Forcesline launched a new web chat platform and the following month, our digital helpline received 147 enquiries.

Whilst 2019 has seen us launch programmes to help younger veterans and their families, we have also sustained support to people of all ages. Through Joining Forces, our partnership with Age UK, we have helped a total of 48,912 veterans born before 1950 and 33,028 relations and their carers. We supported 6,237 Gurkhas and their families who have settled in the UK and we've placed 12 adopted children, over half of whom were considered 'harder to place' due to their age or being in a sibling group.

Throughout our 135-year history we have shown that SSAFA has been a constant for our beneficiaries. In light of the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19, we are evolving our services and our volunteer network, reshaping our support to ensure we can continue to be there for our Armed Forces family.

I'd like to say a huge thank you to our incredible volunteers, employees, partners, donors and fundraisers for their continued dedication throughout 2019. With their ongoing commitment, we will continue being a one-of-a-kind support for the Armed Forces family; being there for as long as they need us.



Lieutenant General  
Sir Gary Coward KBE CB  
**National Chairman**

# OUR AIMS

## OUR VISION

In recognition of their service to the nation, SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, works to ensure that the needs of our Armed Forces, veterans and their families are met in an appropriate and timely way.

## OUR MISSION

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, exists to relieve need, suffering and distress amongst the Armed Forces, veterans and their families in order to support their independence and dignity.

We understand the unique demands of service life, whether it's on UK soil or overseas. Support is available for people at any stage in their military career; from the youngest recruit to the oldest veteran – no one's service is ever forgotten.

## OUR FIVE STRATEGIC AIMS DELIVER OUR VISION AND MISSION BY:

- 1. Understanding need:** Ensure we understand and adapt to the needs of those we support.
- 2. Effective support:** We will alleviate suffering and distress by providing appropriate, timely and effective support.
- 3. Awareness and understanding:** We will strive to be recognised, known and understood.
- 4. Sustainable resource:** We will ensure we have people with the right skills and sufficient time to deliver our services, underpinned by a sustainable income.
- 5. Collaborative working:** We will work together within the organisation and with external partners.

## STILL OPEN FOR BUSINESS

When the COVID-19 pandemic took hold at the beginning of 2020, like the rest of the world, SSAFA had to adapt to the new reality. As the UK's oldest, national, tri-service charity, we are no stranger to dealing with change. Having existed through six monarchies, weathered two World Wars and countless conflicts, COVID-19 is just one more chapter in our legacy of resilience.

United in the desire to continue our unrelenting support to the Armed Forces community, no matter the obstacles, our teams of volunteers and staff have demonstrated the same determination that SSAFA has shown throughout our 135 year history. The need to adapt swiftly is now more important than ever - as we know that vulnerable members of the military community still need us, with the crisis only heightening the difficulties they face.

SSAFA has continued to deliver vital support whilst ensuring that all of our volunteers, staff and, most importantly, our beneficiaries remain protected.

Lockdown did not put the needs of our beneficiaries on furlough. In fact, for many, the crisis only heightened the difficulties they faced.

Our work became remote or virtual. Forcesline- our confidential helpline- continued operating throughout, with our advisors working from home to provide uninterrupted telephone, email and webchat facilities. Our volunteers and mentors continued to provide the individual, tailored support and case-work SSAFA are famed for through phone, email and internet-based virtual meetings.

Our residential facilities remained open providing support for victims of domestic violence, whilst our UK and overseas health care and social work services have also remained operational throughout, with medical consultations, social and welfare interviews conducted via secure, internet video call platforms and by phone.



# OUR 2019 NUMBERS



**85,616**

people in the Armed Forces community have received our support - 4% more than in 2018.



**1.5m**

hours were donated by our volunteers during 2019.



**2,206**

people were helped through our veterans in the criminal justice system programme.



**5,201**

volunteers helped us deliver vital support all over the world.

**ssafa**  
the  
Armed Forces  
charity



**385**

Service leavers supported through our mentoring scheme.



**41,365**

visits and cases were completed by our volunteers.

## GET INVOLVED

Could you be a SSAFA volunteer or mentor?

You can be part of our network of support for the Armed Forces community.

You'll learn new skills and make a difference to someone's life. Find out how you can make a difference, visit [ssafa.org.uk/volunteer](https://ssafa.org.uk/volunteer)

# HOW WE SUPPORT THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, provides lifelong support to serving Armed Forces personnel (both regulars and reserves), veterans, and their families. We began our work in 1885 and in 2019 our teams of volunteers and

employees helped more than 85,000 people – from Second World War veterans to those involved in more recent conflicts, and their families. We recognise that behind every uniform is a person – and sometimes that person, or their family, is in need of help.



# OUR SSAFA NETWORK WORLDWIDE

90 BRANCHES

59 SERVICE COMMITTEES

51 EMPLOYEE LOCATIONS

NORTHERN IRELAND  
1 BRANCH  
1 COMMITTEE  
2 EMPLOYEE LOCATION

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND  
1 BRANCH  
1 EMPLOYEE LOCATION

CROWN DEPENDENCIES  
(GUERNSEY, ISLE OF MAN AND JERSEY)  
3 BRANCHES

WALES  
8 BRANCHES  
2 COMMITTEES

SCOTLAND  
21 BRANCHES  
5 COMMITTEES  
8 EMPLOYEE LOCATIONS

ENGLAND  
52 BRANCHES  
37 COMMITTEES  
40 EMPLOYEE LOCATIONS

OUR PRESENCE OVERSEAS  
4 Branches  
14 Committees

We support regulars, reserves, veterans and their families in every county in the UK. Our volunteer network also extends abroad, with four branches and 14 service committees on military bases overseas.

*“Within 24 hours we’d gone from expecting our second child, to Victoria needing an operation for cancer”*



MARC AND VICTORIA NEVER IMAGINED THEY COULD BE FACING CANCER. THANKFULLY, THE COUPLE WERE INTRODUCED TO SSAFA, AND RECEIVED THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT THEY NEEDED TO BATTLE ON.



## - MARC'S STORY -

**M**arc, a Sergeant in the British Army and his wife Victoria were expecting their second child together, Marc's third. But at the 12-week scan, the couple faced devastating news.

“At the scan I noticed that the midwife was looking shocked.” Marc said “She turned to me and Victoria and said ‘I am really sorry but there’s no baby there.’”

The couple were sent for further tests which revealed Victoria had a cancerous growth which mimicked symptoms of pregnancy. She was sent for an operation and referred to Charing Cross Hospital for specialist care.

SSAFA raised £2,400 with help from ABF The Soldier's Charity, Royal Logistic Corps Association Trust, The Kings Hussars Regimental Funds and the Royal British Legion, to cover the cost of their 2-year-old daughter's childcare whilst they travelled back and forth from Dorset to London for treatment.

Marc said: “I was quite proud. I would probably have struggled rather than seek

help, but that decision was taken out of my hands thankfully.

“I was worried about loss of income and a huge difference in our outgoings. Instead of just the usual day-to-day costs we had to drive to hospital in London, paying £50 a day for parking there. At home we always had to have the heating on because of the chemotherapy, so it was like living in a sauna. The costs were just huge in every way.”

In 2019, once Victoria was given the all clear, Marc took on a fundraising challenge for SSAFA, cycling from John O'Groats to Lands' End, then to Exeter, and ran four marathons, before arriving at Bovington Camp.

In February 2020, the couple welcomed a daughter.

“I never thought at aged 36 and 31, we would need to ask for help. Especially for cancer. But without SSAFA, and without the support we received, I don't think we'd be where we are now.”



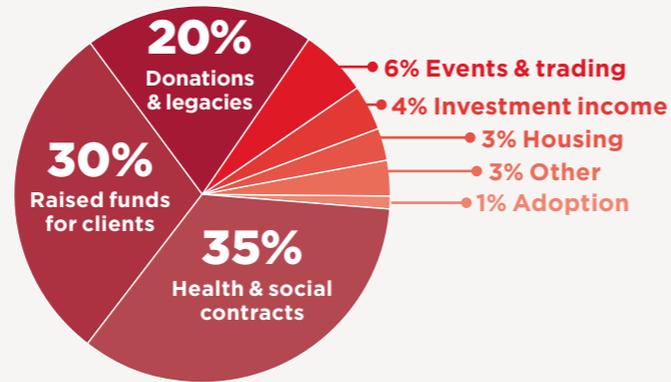
[CLICK HERE TO WATCH A VIDEO OF MARC'S STORY](#)



# OUR FINANCES - AN OVERVIEW

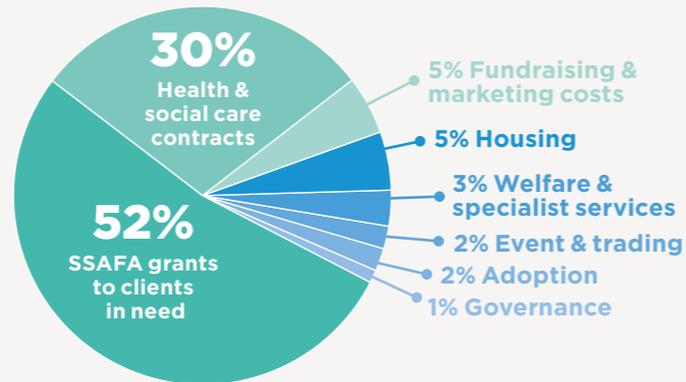
## WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

Adoption	£368,000
Donations & legacies	£8,722,000
Events & trading	£2,788,000
Funds raised for clients in need	£13,188,000
Health & social care contracts	£15,541,000
Housing	£1,136,000
Investment income	£1,655,000
Other	£1,287,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£44,685,000</b>



## HOW WE SPEND THE MONEY

Adoption	£721,000
Events & trading	£876,000
Fundraising & marketing costs	£2,228,000
Governance	£247,000
Health & social care contracts	£13,427,000
Housing	£2,281,000
SSAFA grants to clients in need	£23,757,000
Welfare & specialist services	£1,394,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£44,337,000</b>



# SSAFA'S FORCESLINE

**F**orcesline is our free, confidential helpline for the Armed Forces community, outside the chain of command. Contacting our helpline can be the first step for someone who needs our support - and they're often struggling with complicated, interconnected mental health, physical disability and financial issues.

We always respond with empathy and understanding, without judgement. Those who seek our help know we're here for them and can always point them to the support that's right for them.

In 2019 we received the most contacts about:

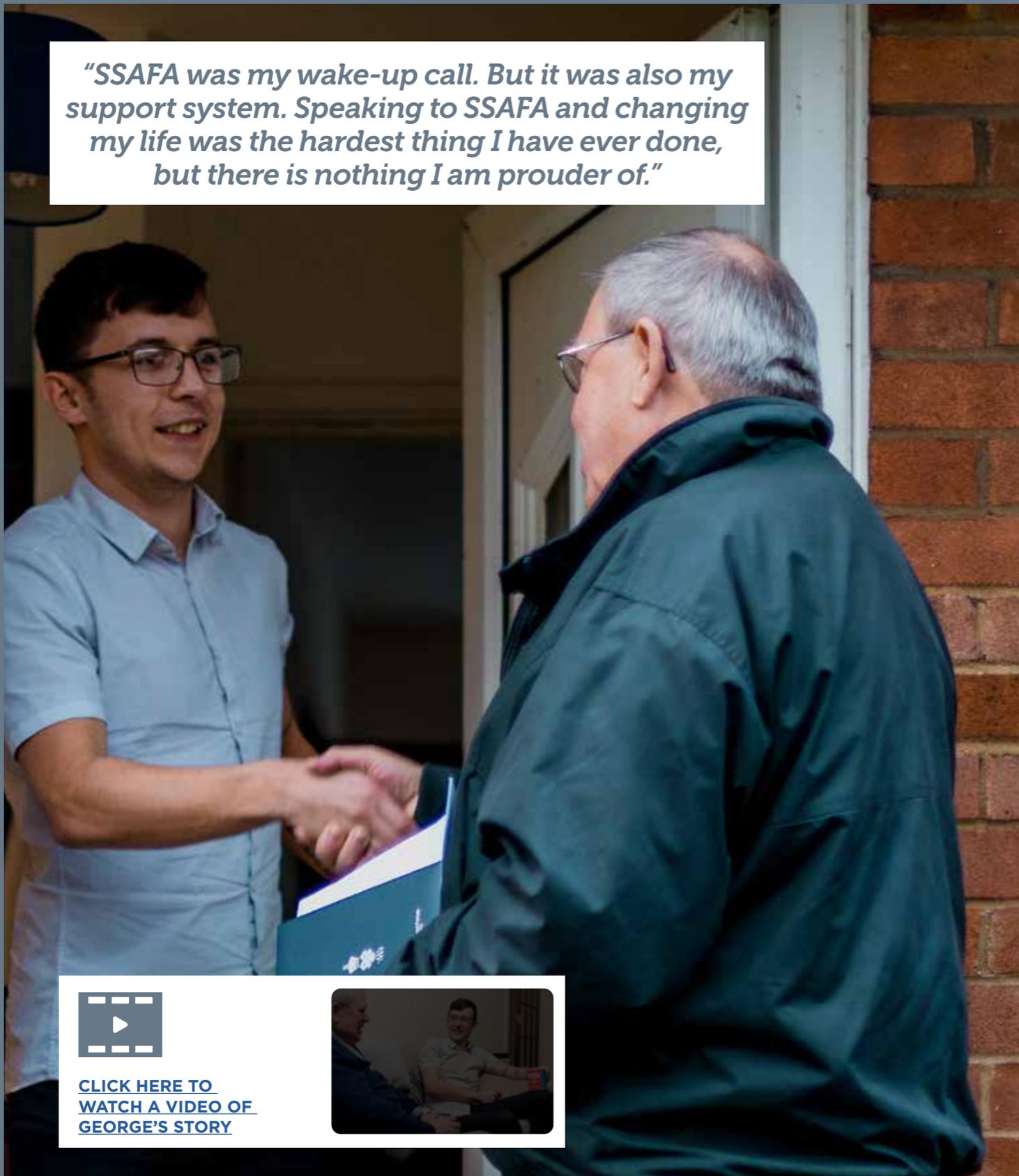
- Debt
- Housing
- Mental and physical health

2019 saw a further increase in the number of people who contacted us concerned about their mental health. We also launched a new webchat facility, increasing the ways people could get in touch with our Forcesline advisors. As a result of the new digital platform, we have seen a rise in the number of people under 30 contacting us.

## We dealt with 29,930 calls, webmail, emails and letters to Forcesline last year.



*“SSAFA was my wake-up call. But it was also my support system. Speaking to SSAFA and changing my life was the hardest thing I have ever done, but there is nothing I am prouder of.”*



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH A VIDEO OF GEORGE'S STORY](#)



DRINK AND DEBT OVERWHELMED 26-YEAR-OLD GEORGE TO THE POINT HE WAS FACING HOMELESSNESS. FORTUNATELY, THE FORMER REME CRAFTSMAN MADE A CALL TO SSAFA'S FORCESLINE JUST BEFORE HE HIT ROCK BOTTOM. IT WAS HIS FIRST STEP BACK FROM THE BRINK.



## - GEORGE'S STORY -

**G**eorge McKenzie served five-years in the British Army but left after he was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. He accrued a small amount of debt whilst serving and drank habitually. When he left the Forces his situation worsened, he drank heavily, and his debts mounted.

"I lived with my grandparents and was working, but I owed more than I earned each month. Bailiffs showed up at their house, so they asked me to leave."

George moved to a shared house but wasn't eating or cleaning properly. He also failed to keep up with rent. Facing eviction and homelessness, he phoned Forcesline for help.

"It took me a long time to pick up the phone. I remember sitting for hours wondering if I could or should do it. Being an ex-soldier, I didn't want to admit I needed help. It was terrifying.

"Eventually I dialled the number. Before I knew it, they had the details they needed and told me someone would be in contact to help. Then I met Derek, my caseworker."

Derek secured £970 to pay George's rent arrears with contributions drawn from ABF The Soldiers' Charity, The REME Charity and The Royal British Legion Central Grants Team, £50 in food vouchers and £10 credit for his phone. Derek also took George to the foodbank, and arranged for financial advice from Step Change Debt Charity, to escape the 'blackhole' he was in.

What initially felt like an impossible task quite quickly became achievable, thanks to SSAFA.

"Speaking to Derek gave me the boost I needed. I realised the way I was living my life was not okay and it was time to turn it around.

"I got a job and was able to afford to move into a nice flat, as well as pay back my debts in manageable chunks."

Since being supported by SSAFA, George has given up alcohol, met his partner Immi and became engaged. They moved into a three-bedroom house and have recently welcomed a daughter, Lily.

# REACHING THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF VETERANS

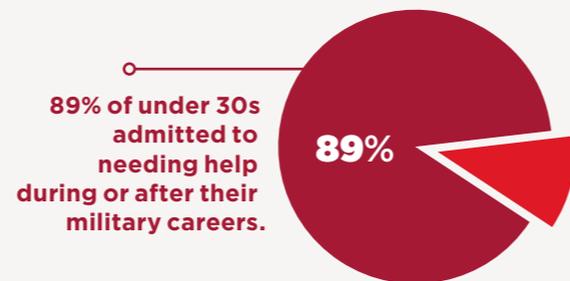
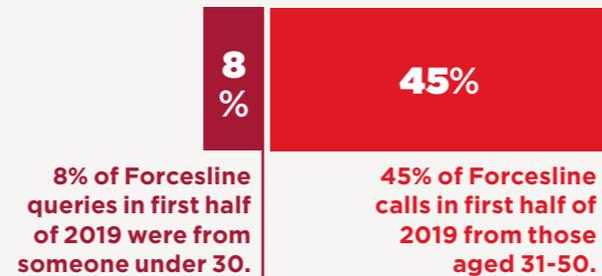
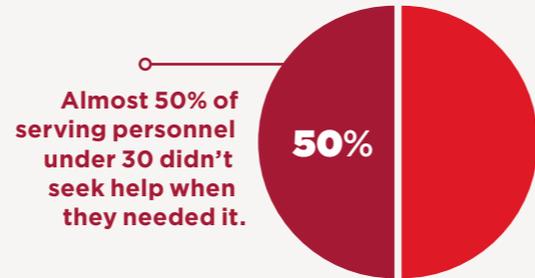
One of our strategic aims is to ensure that we understand and adapt to the needs of our beneficiaries. In 2019, when quarterly figures for SSAFA revealed a lack of requests for help from younger serving personnel and veterans, we investigated the reason for this worrying trend.

Through survey-based research we were able to identify that a lack of queries did not mean a lack of need; under 30s in the military community did require assistance they were just not asking for it. The research also revealed the perceived barriers that prevent this younger age group from using our free and confidential phone-based helpline Forcesline. These barriers included a stigma attached to seeking help, concern about the perception of being weak and unable to cope, and unwillingness to share personal details over the phone.

Having identified these barriers, it was clear that we needed to expand our existing Forcesline support to include a digital platform and develop an interactive web chat service. In October 2019, we launched our Forcesline live chat platform, which allows easy interactions with our existing experienced advisors in an online chat format, that we know is preferred by under 30s. This new digital functionality allows currently serving personnel, veterans and their families to receive the support and signposting to specialist services that they need, without having to pick up the phone to ask for help.

**“It’s incredibly important that we make sure our service is flexible and can adapt to fit the needs of the people we support. Our new Web Chat tool makes Forcesline more accessible to younger generations and will encourage those who’ve been reluctant to ask for help to come forward and get the support they deserve.”**

BILL GRANT - FORCESLINE MANAGER,  
SSAFA, THE ARMED FORCES CHARITY



Figures gathered from Forcesline quarterly monitoring data for first half of 2019 and a SSAFA-commissioned survey conducted by Censuswide

# UNDERSTANDING NEED

2019 saw the Forces Additional Needs and Disabilities Forum [FANDF], which is facilitated by SSAFA, conduct the largest known survey into military families with additional needs or disabilities in the UK. For the first time, this group of people shared their insights and experiences in the resulting report *'Families Fighting On'*, authored by FANDF Committee Vice-Chair Maj (Retd) Michelle Claridge MA Ed CMgr MCMI. This research provided a platform for these families to explain, in their own words, their lived experiences and the challenges they face on a daily basis.

255 families from across all the Services took part in the survey. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative responses the report explored everything from accessing health care provisions and educational services, to the impact on gaining civilian employment. *'Families Fighting On'* also explored the challenges of being a Forces family with additional needs and disabilities and the associated impact on military careers and the mental health of carers and families.

- 48% of families surveyed said the primary impact of having a family member with additional needs or disabilities was a disruption or prevention of normal family life.
- 41% said health provisions were the key concerns facing Forces families with additional needs or disabilities.
- 38% of all respondents identified education as the key concern they faced.
- 30% of respondents identified that dealing with the family member(s) additional need or disability directly impacted on their own mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing.
- 35% of surveyed families said they felt a lack of support from their respective Armed Service.
- 18% felt that having a family member(s) with an additional need or disability had impacted on their military career.



Reflecting the experiences of the surveyed families, the *Families Fighting On* report offered 16 recommendations that sought to improve the lived experiences of this cohort of the Armed Forces community. The report and its recommendations were welcomed by the Ministry of Defence. They are now working closely with the FANDF committee, to be a more diverse and inclusive Defence organisation that supports Forces families with additional needs and disabilities. To read the full report please [CLICK HERE](#).

To find out more information about FANDF, please turn to page 33.

# HOW WE SUPPORT THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

1. WELFARE ADVICE AND SUPPORT FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS
2. TAILORED SUPPORT SERVICES
3. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FOR THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

We have more than 5,000 trained SSAFA volunteers who provide personalised, face-to-face support to those in their local area. Our trained welfare advisors and volunteers work with each person to find out exactly what they need. Once we've assessed what is required, we'll help the individual or family access the support they need. This may just be someone to listen to them, but, more often than not, we access financial assistance from statutory and military benevolent funds or foundations that we work with. In addition, we signpost to our other charity partners who can give much needed assistance to help people get their lives back on track.

Whatever they're facing - from debt or addiction to mental health problems - our Forces and their families can rely on SSAFA and our personalised support to help them through it, for as long as it takes to get that person's life back to where they want it to be. When anyone in our Forces family finds themselves in need, SSAFA is the charity they can turn to. Whether it's financial, practical or emotional, we provide the right kind of support, ensuring independence and dignity is protected at all times.

## SIGNPOSTING SUPPORT

Our trained welfare advisors and volunteers work with each person to find out exactly what they need. They may just need someone to listen. But, more often than not, we put them in touch with the specialist support services that can help them get their lives back on track. For example, it might be one of our local SSAFA branches or organisations such as:

- Either the Army Families Federation, the RAF Families Federation, or the Naval Families Federation
- Forces Law
- RFEA, The Forces Employment Charity
- Shelter
- NHS Veterans Mental Health Transition Intervention Liaison Service [TILS]
- Veterans UK



1.

# WELFARE ADVICE AND SUPPORT FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS

**W**e have the largest network of trained volunteers of any UK military charity. They are the heart and soul of SSAFA and our work - a vital part of how we help the Armed Forces community. In 2019, 5,201 SSAFA volunteers supported our Armed Forces around the world, completing 41,365 cases and visits. Whilst our overall number of volunteers decreased slightly in 2019, we managed to complete 15% more cases than in 2018. This success came not only at time of decreased volunteer numbers, but also as our beneficiaries' needs become more complicated and time-demanding; requiring more support and specialist expertise from our dedicated volunteers.

## OUR CASEWORKERS MAKE US ONE OF A KIND

Our nationwide network of trained volunteer caseworkers is a lifeline for people who need our support. Our volunteers get to know each person, finding out what advice and support would work best for them. They then work with different organisations to help them get what they need, whether that is practical, emotional or financial support. This can be anything - from replacing white goods and sourcing living essentials, to accessing welfare benefits, or even counselling to support their mental wellbeing.

We believe that early intervention can make a dramatic difference and visits to those needing support is a key part of our preventative welfare work. Our volunteers also monitor vulnerable beneficiaries, identify and try to anticipate possible problems or needs, and offer advice and assistance to prevent any issues becoming more serious.

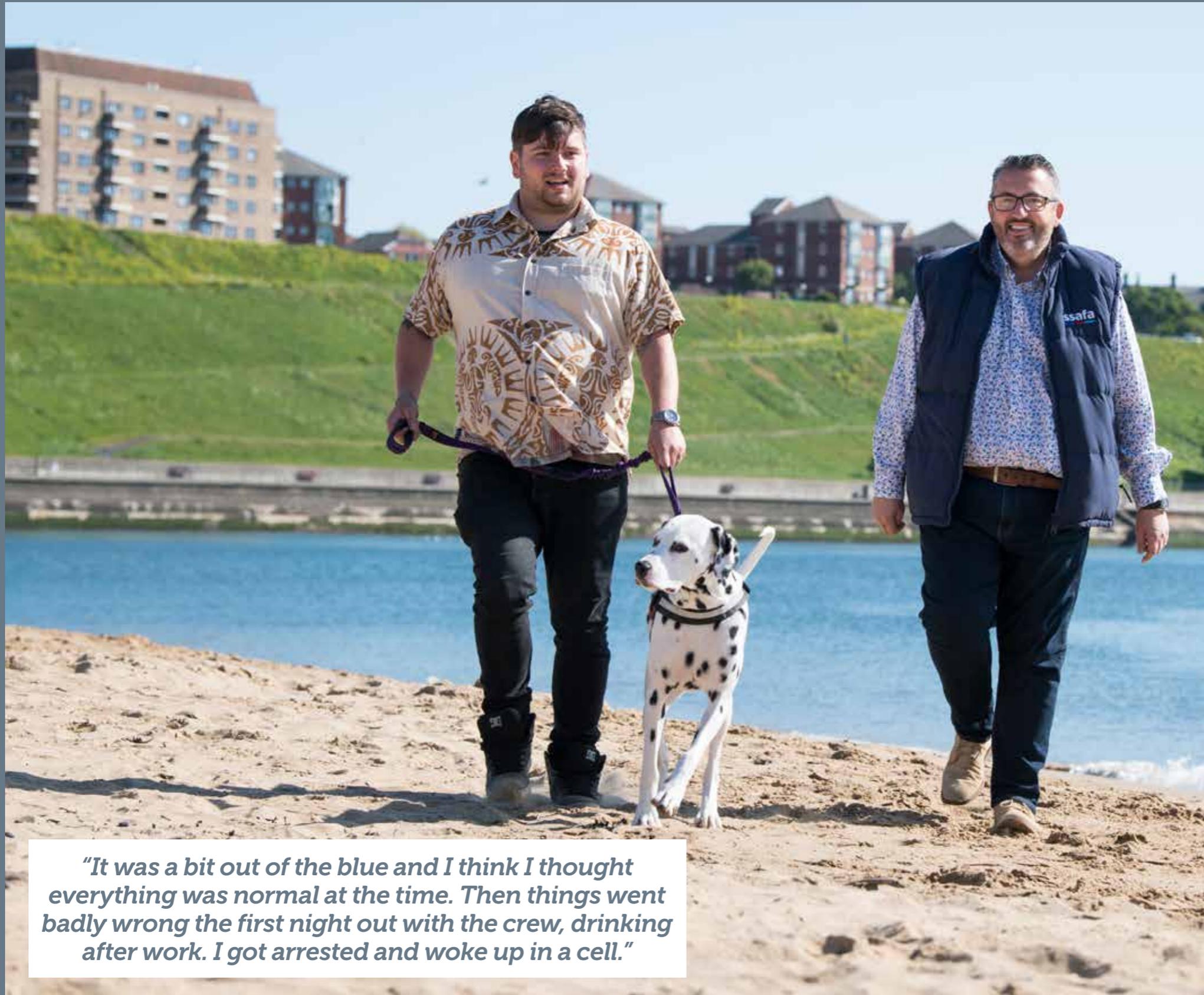
## OUR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS GIVE US A WORLDWIDE PRESENCE

Thanks to our community volunteers, we can be there for serving personnel, and their families, on military bases all over the world. Most of these volunteers are either serving personnel or have a direct connection with the Armed Forces. So, their support is rooted in understanding what it means to be part of the military community and the challenges that it can present to thousands of people. Their day-to-day role involves anything from helping partners adjust to military life, assisting with relocation, accessing welfare benefits or just being there to listen.

## RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown, we have actively adapted our volunteer-led support services that we are so proud of. We have continued to deliver our high standard of personalised support using email, Internet, telephone and other remote access solutions, so the majority of our work has kept going with minimal disruption. We are in constant contact with our volunteer network to ensure it is operating safely while ensuring that we do everything we can to protect our beneficiaries, our volunteers and our staff members.





***“It was a bit out of the blue and I think I thought everything was normal at the time. Then things went badly wrong the first night out with the crew, drinking after work. I got arrested and woke up in a cell.”***

WHEN JACK VALENTINE WAS MEDICALLY DISCHARGED FROM THE ROYAL NAVY WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, AGED 25, HE FACED AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.



## - JACK'S STORY -

**W**hen Jack was medically discharged from the Royal Navy, his life fell apart. He had recently passed out, was doing the job he loved, but became unwell whilst deployed and an episode after work sparked the end of his career. Struggling with his mental health and receiving treatment in a psychiatric unit, he left in April 2017. During the resettlement process, he heard about SSAFA's mentoring scheme. He contacted SSAFA for help and was introduced to volunteer Darren Mayne, who he has seen regularly for two years.

With Darren's help Jack has recently found a new role in the security industry, found a place to live and passed his driving test.

“Darren is a legend. He has been absolutely brilliant - helping me with writing a CV and interview techniques. If I feel like I can't leave the house to meet him, he understands and will let me rearrange to another time. We'll meet at a local coffee shop and sit outside so my dog Chief can come too.

“I had left a lot of my old life behind when I signed up, so I had no stability when I came out of the Navy. Having Darren as my mentor has been a massive help. He has helped me get used to everyday life again and is a great listener. I can tell Darren anything.”

# TAILORED SUPPORT SERVICES

**We have a range of specialist services designed to meet the specific needs of the Armed Forces community which are run by SSAFA employees, with support from teams of volunteers. We mentor service leavers and their families as they transition from military to civilian life. We assist veterans in the criminal justice system and, provide a support service to the UK Gurkha veteran community, as well as partnering with Age UK to offer a bespoke programme for veterans born before 1950.**

We work increasingly with younger veterans, as they leave the military, offering support in many areas; such as mentoring during their transition to civvy street or support around financial management and how to access to welfare benefits. We also help older veterans struggling with disability, sourcing practical items such as mobility aids or replacing household white goods. SSAFA is here for the Forces families and dependents of the UK's Armed Forces too. We provide assistance to make sure loved ones have the help they need, whether that is financial, practical or emotional.

We offer a range of housing, including long-term accommodation for older and disabled veterans, short-term housing for victims of domestic violence, and home-from-home respite care for families of injured service personnel. We also run a series of support groups; ranging from bereavement, families affected by injury and those affected by the suicide of a loved one. Our support forum for those in the military who have a family member with an additional need or disability also provides short break holidays. In addition, SSAFA runs the UK's only adoption agency specifically designed for serving Armed Forces personnel.

## SUPPORTING GURKHA VETERANS IN THE UK

Gurkhas are Nepalese soldiers recruited to the British Army. More than 12,500 Gurkha veterans have settled in the UK with their families. Some struggle with inadequate funds and income, ill health, low literacy and poor English language skills, all of which can lead to isolation and poverty. In 2017 we launched our Gurkha support service, using a LIBOR grant fund, to help the Gurkha community integrate and thrive in the UK.

Since 2018, we've been working with the Gurkha Welfare Trust, Gurkha Brigade Association, ABF The Soldiers' Charity, Army Welfare Service, Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund and Gurkha communities to provide assistance to these veterans. In 2019, 6,237 Gurkha veterans and their families were helped by our wide range of services. We have continued translating support materials into Nepalese and created more promotional materials to help our volunteers reach even more people, including an animated video about Life in the UK and a health and wellbeing booklet. 15 pilot Gurkha branches are now operating across the UK, and 2019 saw the successful recruitment of outreach workers for the north of England and Wales in a bid to reach smaller and more isolated Gurkha communities.



## MENTORING EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL

SSAFA's mentoring offers readily accessible one-to-one support for up to a year after leaving the Armed Forces, giving mentees space to explore their ideas, feelings and plans, whilst being assisted by a SSAFA mentor. Our focus has been on promoting the element of early intervention with service leavers who may experience difficulties when leaving the Armed Forces, up to two years post discharge. This applies to both those who are wounded, injured and sick and those having difficulties transitioning to civilian life.

2019 saw our mentoring trials at Catterick Garrison, which had begun in January 2018, go from strength to strength. We supported 385 veterans across the three military services, which represented a 31% increase on 2018. We arranged mentoring for 330 of the 2019 cohort and referred the remaining 55 to other organisations for more appropriate support. 20 of the 330 people who came to us for support were family members of service leavers and veterans, which represented a 150% increase in families engaging with the programme. We saw the largest increase in mentees from the Royal Navy, 78%, whilst British Army individuals receiving mentoring increased by 52% and the RAF increased by 23%. At the beginning of 2020, our 185 mentors were working with their mentees on a weekly basis, creating the individual package of support needed to get their lives back on track. This can be anything from accessing benefits, housing or employment guidance, or medical advice.

We're proud that 12 of our volunteer mentors were recognised for their long service with SSAFA in 2019. They all received their five year SSAFA service award, demonstrating the enjoyment and sense of fulfilment the mentors gain from providing support to our veterans.



**“It's really rewarding to see someone's confidence grow... I would highly recommend being a SSAFA mentor. It is personally rewarding and challenging and the support that you get from SSAFA, both from the regional mentoring coordinator and the training plan is second to none.”**

DARREN, SSAFA MENTOR

## GET INVOLVED

**Could you be a mentor and make difference?**

**If you'd like to become a mentor, helping men and women adjust to life outside the Armed Forces, we'd love to hear from you - especially if you've served too.**

**Visit: [ssafa.org.uk/mentoring](https://ssafa.org.uk/mentoring)**



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH A VIDEO OF RICH'S STORY](#)



**- RICH -**

**When Rich, a former Lance Corporal in the British Army, went to prison for conspiracy to supply cocaine, SSAFA stepped in to support his family and to help him out of a life of crime.**

Rich led a double life. When he left the Army in 1995 and started work in security and close protection, he met a series of 'bad characters' and made a series of bad decisions that sucked him into a world of organised crime.

He was part of the club scene of the 90s and 00s and would take and sell drugs to feel alive, until he got caught by a huge police operation and his crimes were exposed. His family were completely unaware of Rich's crimes until his arrest, but his wife and two sons stood by him. SSAFA did too; assisting the family with travel

costs so they could visit Rich in prison and supporting Rich whilst he was inside as well.

Seven years later, Rich has been released from prison and is making a fresh start. He now is aiming to use his experience to help other veterans who are at risk of taking the wrong path and encourages them to work with SSAFA.

"SSAFA has been fundamental in keeping my family together. They provided stability while I was away. They were our support network.

"They helped my wife and children when they were in need, and they were the only charity consistently in prison helping me to turn my life around.

"I'm so grateful. Thank you. Just thank you."

***"SSAFA...provided stability while I was away... they were the only charity consistently in prison helping me to turn my life around."***

### SUPPORTING VETERANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM (VCJS)

VCJS is the term used to describe our work with members of the Armed Forces community who have found themselves within the criminal justice system (CJS), whether that is in prison, in immigration removal centres, on probation or completing a community sentence. This work also includes supporting the families of veterans, including an estimated 20,000 children.

2019 saw a new look VCJS service following our review in the previous year. This had identified a clear need for a consistent and more proactive support structure to include prisons, immigration removal centres and the probation service. As a result, we merged our Prison In-reach (PIR) programme with our VCJS service, creating a unique non-judgemental support network across the UK. Irrespective of the type of offence committed - we'll listen, we won't judge, and we will support the veteran and their family as best we can.

Wider promotion of the support SSAFA offers at a local level across the CJS, and the development of VCJS Divisions at 10 SSAFA branches, has seen greater engagement with veterans in the criminal justice system. As a result the number of veterans in the CJS supported by SSAFA has increased by 96% compared to 2018.

In 2019, our specially trained caseworkers supported 2,206 veterans in prison or on probation. Our volunteers visit at least once a month; this allows us to maintain visibility across the prison itself, raise awareness of SSAFA and ensure that the veteran community know help is always available if needed. It also gives caseworkers the opportunity to meet with prison staff and inmates on a regular basis, not only when there is an immediate need. This can take the form of an informal chat, a group meeting or a one-to-one interview to identify what support they may need now, or on release. Frequent visits to the prisons allow us to ensure that prisoners know we are there for their families too. They can rest assured that their families are accessing the right welfare benefits with SSAFA's help and are able to plan for the future.

2019 saw the introduction of our new Supporting Offenders training course. This innovative course includes a veteran, who has been through the CJS and was assisted by SSAFA, sharing their first-hand experiences in order to encourage further engagement with the VCJS community. In Northern Ireland the team has been working closely with officers from the Prisoner Development Unit across the prison estate in a bid to establish a SSAFA in-reach and probation support service.

We actively work collaboratively with Project Nova, Walking with the Wounded and Care After Combat, as well as ensuring strong links are developed with the local SSAFA branch where the individual is likely to be relocated on release. Much of the support centres around funding for accommodation or domestic goods. We can also help the veteran during the first 72 hours of release - giving them someone to talk to and signpost them in the right direction for further support. We have found that where contact and engagement is made at the start of a custodial or community sentence, with guidance provided early on, individuals tend to address their issues and needs prior to release. This proactive approach results in them being less likely to have problems in the future. In 2019, the success of our work was recognised by HMP Highpoint's Head of Reducing Re-Offending, who awarded Paul Storey, our In-Reach caseworker for SSAFA Suffolk, with the People's Award, in acknowledgement of the positive impact of Paul's sterling work.

In August 2019, the Armed Forces Covenant 'Trust Fund' awarded SSAFA's VCJS project £111,89, which had helped to fund and develop the service further. During 2020, we'll continue to grow our specialist VCJS divisions in regions which have a high concentration of prisons. We will also continue to raise awareness of our families' support services campaign, working alongside children and prisoners' family organisations to promote how we can support the veterans' families during this difficult time.

### JOINING FORCES: AGE UK AND SSAFA

Throughout 2019 we made great progress with our Age UK partnership to improve the lives of veterans born before 1950, their families and carers. Through Joining Forces, we reached many older veterans who wouldn't have come to us otherwise, providing help at home - such as arranging adaptations, rise and recline chairs and new heating systems.

The 12 SSAFA branches participating in the Joining Forces project have directly supported 170 cases in 2019, whilst the overall project with Age UK has helped in excess of 45,000 veterans and more than 11,400 families and carers. The project was shortlisted for the Charity Partnership of the Year at the Third Sector Award, in recognition of the positive impact the scheme had on the UK's older veteran population. As the funded programme drew to a close at the end of 2019, the SSAFA team has been actively working with Age UK to secure further funding and ensure a sustainable legacy of engagement with older veterans in the years to come.



### GLASGOW'S HELPING HEROES

Glasgow's Helping Heroes (GHH), SSAFA's partnership with Glasgow City Council, helps local veterans access assistance across a variety of areas including housing, employment and health. We supported 319 people in 2019, a 15% increase on 2018, with the number of RAF clients doubling and a similarly significant increase in the number of Royal Navy beneficiaries.

During 2019, the GHH team helped 42 people into secured tenancies and 19 people into employment. The project not only provided emergency funds and financial support through almonisation but also helped beneficiaries access state welfare benefits, free counselling and food bank vouchers. The estimated value of this support was in excess of £150,000.

Launched in 2018, the tenancy sustainment programme, funded by a grant of £25,000 from the Nationwide Community Fund continued to be successful in helping beneficiaries maintain their housing tenancies. Further funding has been awarded and, as a result, the tenancy sustainment programme will continue for the next two years. The proven interventions and support of the programme has also been shared across other SSAFA projects including Gildea House which is developing the lessons of GHH to help those who turn to them for assistance.



### OUR 'OUTSTANDING' ADOPTION AGENCY FOR MILITARY COUPLES AND FAMILIES

We have provided adoption agency for military families since the 1950s and are regularly inspected by Ofsted since becoming a registered adoption agency in 2000. We are proud to say that in November 2019, we were inspected by Ofsted and were awarded an 'Outstanding'; rating in all categories. The governmental inspectorate found that the overall experiences and progress for service users, the help and protection provided to children, young people and adults and the effectiveness of the service's leaders and managers were all outstanding, the highest award offered by Ofsted.

Our dedicated social workers make sure military families have the same chance to adopt as civilians. In 2019, we placed 12 children with new families, and we approved a further eight new families for adoption. Over half of the children we placed with our adopters were considered 'hard to place' as they are over four years old or in a sibling group. Our adoption team also dealt with 195 adoption enquiries through the year. We have seen a rise in single adopters coming through the process, and also an increase in applications from BAME and LGBT households.



We also provide comprehensive, post-adoption support (PAS) for all our military adopters. Our PAS events were more popular than ever this year. 43 families and 70 children were supported by the PAS service. Whilst our two annual PAS events - a one-day training and activity weekend which offer vital peer-to-peer support and confidence building activities - were well attended by 24 families and 47 children.

To find out more about our unique adoption and specialist post-adoption support services, visit [ssafa.org.uk/adoption](https://ssafa.org.uk/adoption)





WHEN CHRIS AND ELISSA HEBDEN FIRST SAW AN ARTICLE FOR SSAFA'S ADOPTION SERVICE IN AN RAF MAGAZINE, THEY HAD NO IDEA IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A JOURNEY TOWARDS STARTING THEIR NEW FAMILY. NOW WITH TWO ENERGETIC CHILDREN AT HOME, THE COUPLE AND CHILDREN'S LIVES HAVE CHANGED FOREVER.



## - HEBDEN FAMILY -

**“We tried for quite a long time to have our own children, but it didn't happen” Elissa said. “When we read the article about adopting with SSAFA we thought ‘okay let's try it’.**

“When we were posted to RAF Marham, we picked up the phone and started the process. We went to a preparation group in London which was superb. We were convinced. There was no question... we were going for it.”

The couple were approved by SSAFA's independent Adoption Panel and were soon sent profiles of children.

“I was walking back home from work and Ronnie our social worker sent me a message and said ‘Have a look at these two as soon as you get home’. And my

heart just melted straight away. So many people ask, ‘Why those two?’, but there was just something about the picture and the write up that just made us go ‘yeah they're ours’. It was just four months between seeing their profile and having them move in.”

Chris, a Sergeant in the RAF added, “When we put them to bed that first night we just thought ‘This is our life now. It's started. Its real.’”

“SSAFA you've just been amazing. Thank you so much for giving us our wonderful children. Most people who adopt are on their own, they don't get the support they need.... but we know we have SSAFA there, when we need you.”

***“When we put them to bed that first night we just thought ‘This is our life now. It's started. Its real.’”***

## HOUSING

In 2019, we helped 2,067 people through our housing services:

- **784 personnel and family members in Norton Homes**
- **29 women and 37 children at our Stepping Stone Home, Gildea House**
- **955 residents at Fisher House**
- **75 residents in our independent living accommodation, the Royal Homes in Wimbledon**
- **92 residents in our bungalows across the country and St Vincents Care Home**

We offer a range of safe and comfortable housing options, including long-term accommodation for older and disabled veterans. We also offer short-term housing for families of injured service personnel at our Norton House and at Fisher House, our partnership with the Fisher Foundation in Birmingham. We make certain our residents meet the eligibility criteria in our housing schemes with our robust selection and application process.

Following the decision in 2018 to streamline our estate and housing services, we closed Longside Stepping Stone home in April 2018, finally selling it in January 2019. We also reduced our residential properties on the Isle of Wight selling St Vincents Residential Care Home and the 19 accompanying bungalows. St Vincents Residential Care Home was sold as a going concern in March 2019, with SSAFA continuing to support St Vincents 15 residents until the new owners took over their care and the management of the home. The 19 bungalows were sold in December 2019. SSAFA still own 26 bungalows and cottages providing homes for veterans.

### Norton House Stanford Hall

Thanks to the unwavering support of SSAFA's donors, Norton House, Stanford Hall opened its doors in September 2018. Norton House provides free home-from-home accommodation for families whilst their loved ones are undergoing treatment in the nearby Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre (DNRC). This wonderful facility offers a fully accessible kitchen and sitting room, along with a lift leading to eight bedrooms which can accommodate various sized families together. Having a place to stay and the caring support of staff has been particularly reassuring for families with loved ones recovering from serious illness or injury. Future plans include an upgrade of the garden to make it more accessible, creating a friendly and tranquil environment for families to enjoy.

### Providing Domestic Refuge

Gildea House, our Stepping Stone Home provides safe accommodation and a support network for families of serving personnel having relationship difficulties or suffering domestic abuse. At this facility, we continue to measure a range of wellbeing outcomes according to the terms of grants from Supporting People, which are funded through local authorities. These outcomes include economic wellbeing, health, access to training and education, safety, positive contribution to the community, equal opportunity and inclusion, housing relocation and the children's ongoing education.



## FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS FOR ARMED FORCES

2019 saw us re-launch the Families of Wounded Injured and Sick Service Personnel (FISP) support group, and interest in the group has grown, with activity increasing into 2020. Collectively, SSAFA's support groups assisted 56 people in 2019, with our more established Bereaved Support Group (BSG) having the highest attendance. Throughout the year we have been inviting feedback from support group members to ensure that our beneficiaries receive the right help at the right time, tailoring our services accordingly to these needs.

Coverage in the media has continued to shine a light on the increasing numbers of people from the military community who are struggling to cope with mental health issues. Figures released by the Ministry of Defence in March 2020 revealed that the number of suicides among military personnel had increased over the last five years, with 63 confirmed suicides between 2015 and 2019.

Alongside our existing support groups, we recognise that a relative of someone who took their own life needs different support and, as a result, we established a new support group for those Armed Forces families affected by the suicide of a loved one. This new group had its first meeting in February 2019 with 15 bereaved family members coming together to share their experiences in order to draw mutual support. By the end of 2019 our Military Families Affected by Suicide (MFAS) had 21 members.

Whilst all of our support groups have been face-to-face to date, with the social distancing regulations and travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we have reviewed what groups support we can deliver and how. From April 2020, we have successfully started to run online support groups, with one-to-one break-out sessions, using webchat and digital calling applications. This is vital as we are able to continue to maintain that connection with those families needing support and open channels of communication during the difficult time of lockdown,



## FANDF AND SHORT BREAKS FOR FAMILIES

The Forces Additional Needs and Disability Forum (FANDF) is a support group for people in the military who have a family member with an additional need or disability. 2019 marked the 30th anniversary of the Forum, and their committee conducted the largest known survey into the issues faced by Forces families with additional needs and disabilities. To read more about the survey's findings please read page 15.

In 2019, 173 members were supported by FANDF, and we received 98 additional enquiries for help. Each year we offer free short breaks holidays for those currently serving families with additional needs and disabilities, where abled-bodied family members and those with additional needs are able to enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities in a safe, highly adapted environment. 2019's break was fully booked within 48 hours of opening for sign ups, with a total of 12 families (45 individuals) attending.



HEADING TO THE SSAFA SHORT BREAKS HOLIDAY, CHRIS AND JULIE FARRELL WERE APPREHENSIVE. THEY HADN'T DONE ANYTHING LIKE THIS WITH THEIR CHILDREN, 7-YEAR-OLD HARRY AND 4-YEAR-OLD AALIYAH BEFORE. ON DAY ONE, APPREHENSION TURNED TO EXCITEMENT.



## - FARRELL FAMILY -

**T**he Farrell family, based at RAF Honington, attended SSAFA's Short Breaks in October 2019 so they could enjoy family time together doing something different.

Julie, who works in RAF Personnel Support, found out about the activity holiday through her volunteering role with the charity, which began after SSAFA helped her son get a place at a special school. Knowing it was a trip for military families with a child with additional needs, she felt Short Breaks would be perfect for her family, as son Harry has a condition called 16p11.2 microdeletion chromosome and Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Her young daughter Aaliyah, also takes on a carer role for her older brother, often having to sign for him, so it was important for the Farrell family that everyone got a

break. Though initially nervous, both parents were ecstatic to see the kids having so much fun.

The whole family took part in activities such as horse riding, kayaking, bush craft and archery.

Dad Chris, who is ex-RAF and now works for the MOD as a civilian, said, "Seeing Harry out and about is amazing. It means we can do these things in the future. We can do more activities and meet new people. He's just a happy little boy."

Julie added, "It's great to be with the other parents. We are all in the same situation. Everyone here understands what you are going through. It is non-judgemental. We face a lot of judgement in real life. Here we feel so welcome."

***"Seeing Harry out and about is amazing. It means we can do these things in the future. We can do more activities and meet new people. He's just a happy little boy."***

3.

# HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FOR THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

**We provide primary and community health care and social work services, on contract to the MOD in 12 countries, including the UK. We deliver the Personal Support and Social Work Service on behalf of the RAF, so those serving, and their families can access support on every RAF base in the UK and overseas.**

As part of our Ministry of Defence contracts, we provide primary health care, community health care and social work services to more than 40,000 Armed Forces personnel and their families both in UK and another 11 countries across the world. Through 2019, our services continued to draw down in Germany, where we now have just one medical centre, together with the practice in SHAPE, Belgium. These will finally both close as our contract in North West Europe comes to an end in September 2020.

We continue to deliver Community Healthcare and Social Work services in Cyprus, albeit responsibility for social work delivery will transfer to another provider later in 2020. Our staff continue to deliver social work services in the Falklands, Gibraltar and Brunei. Community healthcare staff continue to work in Canada, Gibraltar and Brunei, and our peripatetic support to Kenya, Italy and Nepal is ongoing, facilitated and overseen by our team in Cyprus.

The need for our support to the RAF has never been greater. As well as providing essential and highly valued support to the Armed Forces around the world, these commercial contracts are an important source of income for the Charity, making a significant contribution to SSAFA's annual balance sheet.

## SUPPORTING WOMEN THROUGH SINGING

The Military Wives Choirs, a subsidiary charity of SSAFA, brings all women in the military community, not just wives, closer together through singing. The Military Wives Choirs supports our mission to relieve need, suffering and distress in the Armed Forces family. Forces families move around frequently, making it tough to put down roots which can lead to feeling isolated. Singing in a choir is scientifically proven to increase wellbeing and combat isolation. More than 2,000 members in over 70 Military Wives Choirs across the UK and on military bases abroad, including Cyprus, Riyadh and the Falkland Islands, come together to sing, share and support one another each week. In 2019, the choirs performed at over 800 events, including a large-scale concert at

Cadogan Hall, the Christmas lights switch-on at 10 Downing Street and Armed Forces Day celebrations. The Military Wives Choirs were also involved in the production of the feature film 'Military Wives', and were preparing to record as the featured artist on the soundtrack, for release in 2020.

For more information, visit [militarywiveschoirs.org](http://militarywiveschoirs.org).



**When 17-year-old Able Rate Neil Francis was left tetraplegic after an accident on shore leave, SSAFA were there to support him and his family. Almost 30 years on, SSAFA continues to help Neil with his changing needs. Now he has started volunteering at his local branch, as a thank you for the lifelong support he has received.**

Neil Francis joined the Royal Navy as a radio operator at 16. He had always believed he was invincible, but his life changed a year later when he was in a diving accident while in the Gulf. He was paralysed with very limited movement in his arms. He had broken his neck.

"In that moment, it was a new life." Neil said, "I left that invincible child behind and I was someone else now."

Neil's worries quickly turned to his family. His mother had a young daughter and was heavily

***"To be able to help SSAFA after they have helped me...it's a privilege and a duty."***

pregnant with her third child. The family had little money, and Neil's income had been supporting them. SSAFA came 'to the rescue', supplying nappies for the baby and helping with heating costs. Eventually Neil, left hospital and retrained in IT. SSAFA funded the software he needed.

More recently, in 2019, Neil needed a 4x4 wheelchair to help him travel around his local area and reduce the pain he was in. SSAFA's Gloucestershire branch secured £5,000 from Greenwich Hospital, Independence at Home, Royal Navy Benevolent Fund and The Royal British Legion towards the cost of the chair and Neil raised the rest, with help from locals.

"My caseworker immediately understood me, It was like having a family member coming around and saying: 'yes, I can see you are in pain. I can see you aren't happy. We'll sort it out.' Now I feel free. I go off track. I'm able to be myself... a daredevil again."

Neil is now a SSAFA volunteer, helping his local branch in IT.

# SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT SSAFA AND OUR WORK

It's so important that we continue to raise awareness of SSAFA and explain our work to those people who need our support, and to the general public. We achieved some fantastic media coverage in 2019 reaching millions of people – not just those we can help, but potential supporters, donors and volunteers as well.



Our beneficiaries Mandy and Jamie Small met with our celebrity Ambassador Antony Cotton to support our Big Brew Up 2019 campaign, promoting 'the Power of a Brew' - a cuppa and a chat.

## SSAFA IN THE NEWS IN 2019

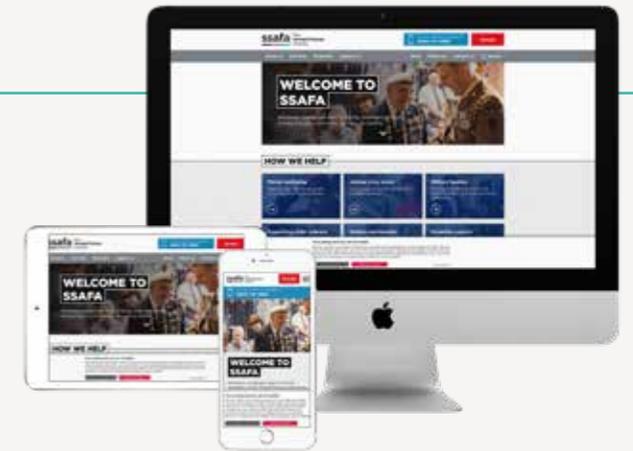
SSAFA successfully achieved over 2,820 pieces of coverage across the national and regional press, broadcast radio, as well as a wide variety of digital platforms and specialist media outlets. In total we reached more than 254,352,800 people across many communications platforms, both on and off-line. This media reach has an Advertising Value Equivalent of over £3 million. We ran a series of campaigns, but some of the key ones included:

- **National Armed Forces Day and 75th Anniversary of D-Day.** SSAFA benefitted from the substantial media and online coverage generated for the Armed Forces Day event held in Salisbury and the 75th Anniversary of D-Day. Sir Gary Coward spoke to Sky News on D-Day, whilst Vice-Chair Kirsty Bushell was interviewed for the Victoria Derbyshire Show on BBC 2 as part of the commemorations. SSAFA veterans' memories of D-Day were shared in both the national and regional press.



- **Our Friendly to Forces Campaign** saw us teaming up with our Corporate Partner Amey, to raise awareness around the stigma of employing ex-Forces personnel. This was a new type of media campaign for SSAFA and focused on Business to Business publications. We focused our impact and targeted business audiences to encourage them to see the benefits of hiring veterans, whilst empowering service leavers themselves. The campaign was covered extensively by commercial sector publications as well as mainstream media and TV, such as Sky News.

- **Our Christmas Campaign** focused on the loneliness often felt at the time of festive celebration. We created a series of short videos of Dame Kelly Holmes, Levison Wood, Antony Cotton and JJ Chalmers speaking about their experiences of loneliness and their admiration for the UK's Armed Forces. Our campaign received major prime time national coverage, including our Forcesline Manager, Bill Grant, featuring on BBC Radio 4's You and Yours, the flagship consumer affairs programme. The campaign was also featured on Sky News, ITV's Lorraine, across the BBC Regional Radio network and in regional press.



## DRIVING OUR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

2019 saw the launch of SSAFA's new website, generating substantial improvements in the charity's reach and engagement with the military community and across our different audiences: volunteers, supporters, fundraisers and many more.

Our new website means that members of the Armed Forces family are accessing information and help quicker and easier than ever before. Many of our branches also developed their own microsites and social media accounts. Through our website, our UK-wide volunteer network also has an internet-based platform to promote their work at a local level, reach out to potential volunteers and supporters as well as offering a local virtual contact point for those needing help. The number of people following our branches social media accounts has increased by 158% since 2018, as more branches engage with this platform to spread the word about SSAFA and our work.

In December 2019 there was a 29% increase in the website's unique users compared to the same period in 2018, and a 48% increase in the number of homepage visits. The number of people accessing information about Forcesline via the new website increased by 530%.

Our new website also enabled us to launch our Forcesline web chat platform - allowing individuals access to our advisors without needing to pick up the phone. For more information on this new digital service, please refer to page 16.

In addition, 2019 saw a 68% increase in online donations compared to 2018; raising £180,093 for the charity.

# RAISING MONEY FOR OUR WORK

**To continue our support for the Armed Forces community, and ensure we have the resources to meet their ever-changing needs, we rely heavily on the success of our fundraising. In 2019 we raised £8.7 million\* from donations, legacies, regional and national events and trading activities. Our incredible volunteers and branch network raised an additional £2.3million\* in their local communities. Thank you to all our generous donors and supporters, those listed on pages 48-50 and those who prefer to remain anonymous.**

2019 was a year of great social, political and economic uncertainty for the UK with historic changes most notably Brexit impacting on the entire nation including the charity sector. A report by the Charities Aid Foundation released in April 2019 found that generating more income was the top challenge for 59% charity leaders surveyed, with 63% feeling Brexit was having a negative impact on their charity, and 37% predicting donations would fall as a result. Against this backdrop, SSAFA's fundraising efforts delivered well on all fronts.



## SUPPORT FROM TRUSTS AND MAJOR DONORS

During 2019, we continued to benefit from the generous support of our key funders, without which the effective reach of our programmes and services would be severely diminished. These include the military Benevolent Funds, with whom we work in close partnership through our casework and other targeted services in support of our beneficiaries. By working together, we reached many more people and provided more effective interventions in the Armed Forces community than would otherwise be possible.

ABF The Soldiers' Charity, once again one of our largest funders, provided considerable support on behalf of Army regiments and corps for casework, Forcesline and Norton House Stanford Hall, for which we are immensely grateful. We also received generous financial support from The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, Greenwich Hospital as well as the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, who underpinned some of our key services including volunteer casework, our helpline and webchat platform through Forcesline, Norton House - Stanford Hall and our transitional mentoring service.

We would also like to give a specific mention and note of thanks to several key donors for their longstanding endorsement of our work. These include the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, the Army Central Fund, Lloyd's Patriotic Fund, The Church of Scotland, The Barbara Naylor Charitable Trust, The Michael Uren Foundation and The Syncona Foundation. Our activities to support working age veterans also continues to benefit from the support provided by the Chancellor of the Exchequer through LIBOR funds, for which we remain extremely thankful.

We also began new partnerships with the Forces in Mind Trust, to support an evidence-based evaluation of the

impact of our Glasgow Helping Heroes project, and with the National Lottery Community Fund to support our work in combatting loneliness and isolation among the Armed Forces community. Both these partnerships will play a significant role in further enhancing our ability to demonstrate our impact in the future and we would like to acknowledge both organisations for their commitment and dedication to SSAFA.

Other important project partnerships include: Gildea House - our Stepping Stone Home, a safe accommodation and support network for families of serving personnel having relationship difficulties or suffering domestic abuse, supported by City Bridge Trust. Our Post-Adoption Support Worker, who provides crucial help and guidance through our Adoption Service to children and parents who are members of the Armed Forces, has been supported by BBC Children in Need. And 'Joining Forces', a project for isolated veterans born before 1950 led by Age UK, is supported by the Aged Veterans Fund and funded by the Chancellor through LIBOR funds.

## GET INVOLVED

**Up for a fundraising challenge?**

**Run, cycle, jump, trek, drive. Or, even if you prefer, something less energetic.**

**However you choose to get involved, the money you raise will help us support our Armed Forces community all over the world.**

**Find out more at: [ssafa.org.uk/fundraise](https://ssafa.org.uk/fundraise)**

*\*Awaiting final audited figures*

## OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS

2019 was a very successful year for our corporate fundraising team. The Defence Industry Charitable Dinner raised an incredible £210,000 for the charity; many thanks to our Platinum Sponsor Northrop Grumman, Gold Sponsors QinetiQ and Thales, Silver Sponsors Fujitsu and Sodexo, Bronze Sponsor MBDA and Programme Sponsor DXC Technology.

We were pleased to announce that both Pinnacle Group and Boeing UK have both confirmed their intention to partner with us, whilst our established partnerships with other leading industry corporations including Amey, Aramark, Compass Group and Openreach continued to grow and strengthen. BACS ran a campaign in the Daily Mail which raised £25,000 for our Mentoring Programme. Nationwide Building Society awarded a

significant grant for our Glasgow Helping Heroes drop in service and Sodexo's Stop Hunger Foundation continued their long standing support, as did BAE Systems who supported Norton House - Stanford Hall.

SSAFA were appointed as the official charity for the British and Scottish Ex-Forces in Business Awards, held in London and Glasgow, which raised £49,000 and significant awareness for the charity

Our challenge and special events attracted new supporters, with 2019 proving a record-breaking year as 50 runners took part in the London Marathon for SSAFA, raising £100,000, whilst an epic tall ship voyage to Normandy saw 32 SSAFA veterans and supporters sail in, the three-masted square-rigged tall ship the Lord Nelson, to Caen marking the 75th anniversary of D-Day.



## BATTLE PROMS 2019

Our second year in partnership with the Battle Proms Concerts was an outstanding success in every way. We were once again proud to be the chosen charity partner for this series of summer concert celebrations which take place in the gardens of some of the UK's most treasured stately homes. The longest running picnic proms series in the UK, Battle Proms bring together glorious orchestral music and breath-taking military displays, including the Red Devils parachute team, Spitfire acrobatic displays and the unique experience of over 200 cannon shots, musket fire and fireworks providing a live accompaniment to the performance of Beethoven's 'Battle Symphony'.

Thanks to the generosity of the audiences, the hard work of our volunteers and a donation from the concert profits from JSL Productions, we raised over £67,000. In addition to the funds raised, the partnership helped us to raise awareness of our work and to recruit new volunteers from amongst the 40,000 visitors, who attended the five picnic concerts during July and August.

The 2020 Battle Proms series has been cancelled due to Covid-19, however we are thrilled to be the confirmed charity partner for the 2021 series, and look forward to another summer of inspiring music in beautiful settings. For more information on the Battle Proms go to: [battleproms.com](https://battleproms.com)



### DEVELOPING OUR COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Our commercial partnerships also produced strong returns, with Thorntons generating £100,000 for the charity through their license and cause-related marketing campaign, linking to sales of their continental chocolate range in the lead-up to Christmas. Hattons of London generated over £40,000 for SSAFA. Our online shop was relaunched in 2018 in order to drive and grow SSAFA's trading and merchandise revenues. This initiative has proved successful with a turnover of over £95,000. Overall commercial fundraising generated a turnover of £414,590\*. To find out more about our SSAFA partner products and our own merchandise, visit: [ssafastore.org.uk](https://ssafastore.org.uk)



### OUR SUPPORTER'S AMAZING FUNDRAISING

Throughout 2019 many determined individuals, our volunteers and many corporate supporters across the country have gone above and beyond to raise money for SSAFA. Amongst the many notable fundraisers, is Christian Lewis and his faithful canine walking companion, Jet.

Since 2017, Chris - a former paratrooper and SSAFA beneficiary - has been on an epic mission to walk the length of the UK coastline and 2019 saw him embark on the Scottish leg of his journey. By the end of 2019 he and his army of supporters had already managed to raise £80,000 and, whilst he had to wait out the COVID-19 lockdown on the uninhabited Orkney island of Hildisay, Chris and Jet have now resumed their walk. With still more coastline to cover on this huge 18,000 km journey, by the end of July 2020, he has now raised over £150,000 and Chris is set to continue to raise even more much needed funds for SSAFA over the coming year.

#### FUNDRAISING DURING COVID-19

With the outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown creating additional strains on the more vulnerable members of the Forces community, we launched our SSAFA Emergency Response Fund. We've seen calls to our confidential helpline, Forcesline, increase with critical requests for urgent help associated with debt, housing and mental health issues associated with loneliness and isolation.

We would like to thank all our corporate and individual supporters, local fundraisers and our own branch network who have made such generous donations to continue this vital work. For more information, please visit [ssafa.org.uk/about-us/our-response-to-covid-19](https://ssafa.org.uk/about-us/our-response-to-covid-19)

### D-DAY 75 CYCLE RIDE

In September 2019, 72 ambitious cyclists embarked on an epic 230-mile cycle challenge to ride across Northern France to mark the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings and to raise money for SSAFA. The ride began at the historic Southwick House near Portsmouth, the forward headquarters for the invasion of Normandy, before travelling on to Caen in Northern France. Amongst the riders taking part in this commemorative cycle to the heroes of D-Day were former pro-cyclist Philippa York and SSAFA CEO Andrew Gregory. The riders pedalled for up to 80 miles a day past the beaches that the Allied Forces stormed over 75 years ago; Sword, Juno, Gold, Omaha and Utah beaches. For Philippa, the 1989 winner of the Tour of Britain and winner of multiple stages of the Tour de France, the ride was a humbling and inspiring experience.

"Standing on a beach in Normandy, where the human costs were as huge as the vista out over the English Channel, you are reminded of how small and insignificant the requirements are today," wrote the champion cyclist following her ride. "I was lucky enough to spend some time with truly inspiring individuals during my time visiting the D-Day beaches on the SSAFA charity ride. I came away from it humbled by the enormity of what happened on that day in June, 75 years ago, touched by the camaraderie of the group and hopeful for those who are in, or could be in, the care of SSAFA."

The Cyclists also rode over Pegasus Bridge, famously taken in the early hours of D-Day by the 6th Airborne Division. The town of Sainte-Mère-Église, which was liberated by the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, also proved a poignant point on the cycle. The trip culminated in a service of Remembrance at the Bayeux Cemetery, the largest WW2 cemetery of Commonwealth soldiers in France.



#### GET INVOLVED

To find out more about our many fundraising opportunities, including a selection of virtual challenge events,

Visit [ssafa.org.uk/support-us/challenge-events](https://ssafa.org.uk/support-us/challenge-events)

\*Awaiting final audited figures



- KATRINA -

**A**fter raising thousands and spending every penny on a lifesaving therapy, Katrina needed financial help to attend vital regular check-ups. That's when she turned to SSAFA.

Katrina Brown, 37, a former Lance Corporal in the Royal Army Medical Corps, was diagnosed with the auto-immune disease Scleroderma in 2008. By 2014, her health deteriorated rapidly and the only way she could survive the condition was through a stem cell transplant in Chicago, America. Time was running out, but the treatment didn't come cheap.

***"I appreciate now more than ever that being part of a huge military community is so important."***

Katrina explains, "My body produced too much collagen, which made my connective tissue go really hard...everything in my body was turning to stone.

"The therapy was my only option. It was either that or I was going to die." Katrina personally fundraised £125,000 to pay for the transplant, which was successful.

However to prevent a relapse, Katrina needed to return to Chicago annually for follow-up care, but she didn't have enough money to get there. She contacted SSAFA in Gloucestershire for help. The branch secured £10,000 funding from Help for Heroes, ABF The Soldier's Charity, Adjutant General's Corps Association and Royal British Legion for flights and accommodation for her and her husband Cpl Martin Brown.

"SSAFA's support had a huge impact. Without SSAFA I wouldn't have been able to go back every year. I appreciate now more than ever that being part of a huge military community is so important – and special.

"But it isn't just the financial support. My case worker Roger has been there for me every step of the way... he is really the person that was pushing for me."

## A BIG THANK YOU

**On behalf of everyone at SSAFA, I would like to say a huge thank you to our hardworking volunteers and employees, our regular and legacy donors, our community fundraisers and our partners.**

Throughout our history, our work has always been driven by a desire to provide the support that members of the Armed Forces family need, whenever they need it. Since 1885 our charity has been relentless in ensuring that our Forces and their families, who have defended and served our nation, have the assistance, independence and dignity they deserve. Of course, needs have changed over the past 135 years and SSAFA must change with them, to ensure we continue to be the unstoppable force for the Armed Forces community. At the time of writing, during the unprecedented national lockdown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, our ability to be flexible, work through the challenges and overcome them has never been more essential.

We wouldn't be able to adapt our services, or offer such far-reaching and tailored support, without the generosity of our benevolent funds, trusts and the many organisations we work in partnership with. So, thank you to them all.

Lieutenant General  
Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL  
Controller



REGULARS AND RESERVES



VETERANS



FAMILIES

## KEY CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND DONORS

ABF The Soldiers' Charity  
Age UK  
Aged Veterans Fund  
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Army Central Fund  
Barbara Naylor Charitable Trust  
BBC Children in Need  
Church of Scotland  
City Bridge Trust  
Forces in Mind Trust  
Greenwich Hospital  
Honourable Artillery Company  
LIBOR Fund  
Livery Companies of the City of London  
Lloyd's Patriotic Fund  
Queen Mary's Roehampton Trust  
Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund  
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity  
Royal British Legion/ Poppy Scotland  
The Michael Uren Foundation  
The National Lottery Community Fund  
The Syncona Foundation  
and those who wish to remain anonymous



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Trinity Insurance  
Valour Band

## THROUGHOUT 2019 THERE WERE SEVERAL EVENTS WHICH ENABLED US TO RAISE BRAND AWARENESS AND FUNDS FOR SSAFA, INCLUDING:

Armed Forces Day in Salisbury  
Battle Proms  
Big Brew Up  
British Ex-Forces In Business Awards  
D-Day 75 Cycle Ride  
D-Day Tall Ships Voyage  
Defence Industry Charitable Dinner  
Five Corporate Friends events  
Kiltwalk  
Openreach and the UK Armed Forces - a Celebration  
Rally for Heroes  
The Wonderwall Cup





# ssafa | the Armed Forces charity

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, has been providing lifelong support to our Forces and their families since 1885. Last year our teams of volunteers and employees helped more than 85,000 people in need, including those still currently serving, veterans from the Second World War and from more recent conflicts, as well as their families.

SSAFA understands that behind every uniform is a person. And we are here for that person - any time they need us, in any way they need us, for as long as they need us.

## NEED TO TALK?

SSAFA's Forcesline is a free and confidential helpline providing advice and information for serving personnel, reserves, veterans and their families, and is completely independent of the chain of command.

■ Call **0800 731 4880** Lines open 09.00 to 17.30 weekdays

■ Visit [ssafa.org.uk/forcesline](https://ssafa.org.uk/forcesline)

To make a donation to support our Armed Forces family:

■ Call **020 7403 8783**

■ Visit [ssafa.org.uk/give](https://ssafa.org.uk/give)



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