

MS

MUTUAL SUPPORT

ARMED FORCES MULTIPLE
SCLEROSIS SUPPORT GROUP

Newsletter

March 2023



What military equipment has the UK sent to Ukraine?

Read about it here: **| Forces |** Net



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Cover Photo:

What military equipment has the UK sent to Ukraine?

Read about it here: [I Forces](#) | Net

FOREWORD

Hello all

I hope you have been doing well in 2023 so far. Every year, It never fails to amaze me that it is March already when the Christmas and New Year period feels like it was just yesterday.

Mutual Support has increased its presence on social media, You can now find us on [Instagram](#) just search for **mss_msupport**. We also have an account on [twitter](#) as well as our [Facebook closed group](#) for existing members and our [public page on Facebook](#) so anyone else can find us. We are working on recording some video testimonies from members to publicise what Mutual Support means to them, if this proves successful we could also create our own YouTube channel.

Don't forget, our next residential support and respite weekend will be at the [Hayes Conference Centre](#) in Derbyshire 12th–14th May 2023. Just for a bit of fun, we will be having a light hearted tribute evening to the Eurovision song contest on Saturday night, so feel free to bring along your fancy dress costume to celebrate, we'll give you more details nearer the time.

We say farewell and thank you to Karen Fisk who has had to step down as our social media volunteer. So, there is an interesting vacant volunteer position available if you fancy it. For more details or to apply please email our administration volunteer, Julie Russell at: adminvolunteer@mutual-support.org.uk

I have to confess that I have struggled at times to find enough content for this issue, so thank you Graham Duncan who has written a very informative article telling us how he managed to get NHS Continuing Health Care for his wife Angie on p12.

Graham is also our membership volunteer, so he has produced a really interesting membership report for you on p13.

Mike Robbins sent in a photo of himself before he left the army on p4. If you have a picture that you are proud of and would like to share with the group, then email it to me and I will be pleased to publish it for you.

Jack Russell has written a report about his and Julies recent visit to the Calvert Trust in the Lake District on p10 & p11, it's well worth a read.

Daryl Carr, our fundraising volunteer is organising a 'Mutual Support Wolfpack Run' read about it on p3.

Leroy Francis is a member of the Veterans' Support Centre (VSC) in Staffordshire which has been given notice of closure by the council. This is a vital local resource that provides a lifeline in so many ways to people who have found themselves in need due to the economic downturn and the cost of living crisis. They need help, read about it on p2.

As usual, we have included a range of signposting features throughout this edition with the aim of providing you with helpful information. We hope there will be something of interest or something useful to you.

Bill Land (editor) communicationsvolunteer@mutual-support.org.uk



Tri-Service & Veterans Support Centre faces closure

A charity helping military veterans faces losing its home unless it can raise enough money to buy it.

Leroy Francis, a member of Mutual Support who served in the RAF for 26 years and has Multiple Sclerosis speaks about how important the Veterans Support Centre (VSC) is to him.

The VSC in Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire has been told by the county council that it intends to close the premises. The centre has been given just six months to raise funds if it wishes to buy the building.



The VSC has created a gofundme page in memory of Bert Turner one of it's late members with the aim of raising funds to buy the centre.

gofundme™
Click here to
make a donation

The centre has attracted the support of local mobile phone entrepreneur John Caudwell who has pledged to match the funds collected from public donations.

The Charity also has a foodbank to help out the wider community.

Veterans Foodbank

Leroy says "I am very grateful for all the support afforded to our cause at my local VSC in Newcastle Under Lyme. The centre as been a place for us veterans to attend each week and I feel that I would not have been able to get this far without the amazing team there who have supported me and my wife on our long journey on my road to recovery.

I am so grateful for all the help I received from Heather Smith and the team at Mutual Support in providing welfare support and sorting out all my benefits after I left hospital back in late 2019.

We were in such a bad situation, trying to cope with things and continue living as normal a lifestyle as possible but struggled to adapt to the huge changes we have experienced and are very thankful for the help and guidance."

The VSC website www.veteranssupportcentre.org.uk/ states, since it first opened it's doors in October 2015, it has had a footfall of approximately 20,000 people.

Run by veterans for veterans

We adopt a 'hub' based approach to supporting veterans in need and have extensive links with local services and businesses such as SSAFA, Veterans UK, Walking with the Wounded and many more. Contact us:

Veterans House, Hassell Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Saffordshire ST5 1AR
Email: info@veteranssupportcentre.org or call: **01782 713 963**

MUTUAL SUPPORT WOLF PACK

Autumn is a fantastic season to be running in the wild, whether it's charging through twisting woodland trails or wading through thick mud and water it's a definite buzz! The man-made obstacles will be changed-up and new exciting obstacles introduced to have you guessing what's around the corner!

We are looking for personnel to form the Mutual Support Wolf Pack, to conduct the Wolf Run at Offchurch, Leamington Spa, on the 2/3 Sep 2023. More details can be found at the link below.

<https://www.bch.org.uk/event/autumn-wolf-run-23>

This provides us a great opportunity to raise money for Mutual Support. Anyone interested, please get in touch with Daryl Carr on Email:

FundraisingVolunteer@mutual-support.org.uk.

Share:



Never alone.

We're here for **everyone** affected by MS

Find up-to-date information on COVID-19 and MS, practical help and ways to connect.

You may be alone, but we're only a call or a click away.

We know it's tough for lots of people right now. But we'll get through this together.

[Read the latest information about care and support and coronavirus COVID-19](#)



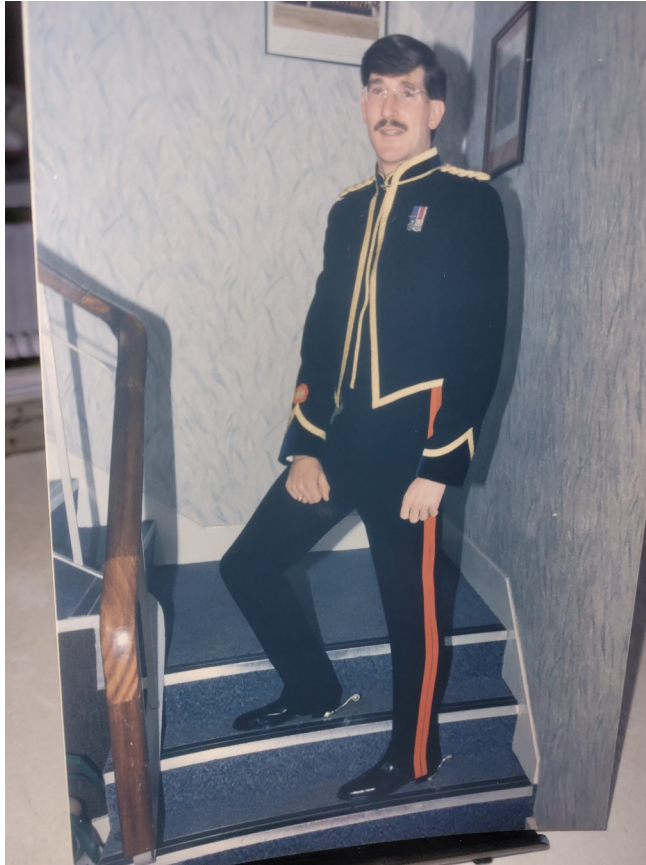
Sign up for the Buzz Get the latest MS News



Questions about MS?

0808 800 8000

Picture Wall



This is Mike Robbins, Mike has been a member of Mutual Support since the creation of the group.

Mike's army career was in the [Royal Army Ordnance Corps](#) (RAOC) until it was merged with certain other British Army corps in 1993 to form the [Royal Logistic Corps](#) (RLC).

This image shows Mike when he was a Staff Sergeant Major with the rank of WO1 wearing the brand new mess dress of the RLC.

If you have a picture of yourself that you would also like to share with the group then please email it to us at: communicationsvolunteer@mutual-support.org.uk with a brief explanation about what the image represents.

Mike has also written his story for the MS Trust '[My life with MS and Mutual Support](#)' Read the article here:



Multi-million pound veterans' centre opens at Shropshire orthopaedic hospital

Healthcare provision for military veteran patients has taken a huge leap forward at Shropshire's specialist orthopaedic hospital with the UK's first dedicated orthopaedic centre for veterans now officially open for business.

Read the entire article in the Shropshire Gazette [here](#).

Help 4 Homeless Veterans

WHAT WE DO

Help 4 Homeless Veterans charity is based in South Yorkshire. We offer assistance to Veterans elsewhere but most of our resources are here in the North of England.

Our work in this part of the Country gained us a Royal award last year. Our primary focus is the support of former members of HM FORCES (VETERANS) facing homelessness.

We work with private landlords and some housing associations to help veterans when social housing isn't available. We regularly put homeless veterans into B & B as a stop gap whilst helping find a longer term solution to their situations.

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Since the charity was created it has helped almost 800 veterans with their housing problems.

We can only continue this essential work because of grants from supporters and donations from the general public.

From everyone involved, we extend our deepest gratitude.



[Find Out More](#)

REQUEST HELP

At Help 4 Homeless Veterans, we are here to help those Veterans in need.

Feel free to enter your details and submit our request help form. One of the team will be in touch as soon as we can.

[Request Help](#)

Bank holiday proclaimed in honour of the coronation of His Majesty The King Charles III



The bank holiday will be on Monday 8th May 2023, following the Coronation on Saturday 6th May. The bank holiday will take place across the UK.

The [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website states; In line with the bank holiday to mark Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953, this will be an opportunity for families and communities across the country to come together to celebrate.

The following is an extract from the [Royal.uk](https://www.royal.uk) website:



The Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort will take place at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th May, 2023. The Service will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. As previously announced, the Service will reflect the Monarch's role today and look towards the future, while being rooted in longstanding traditions and pageantry.

Across the Coronation Weekend, there will be further opportunities for people to come together in celebration of the historic occasion. On Sunday, 7th May 2023, a special Coronation Concert will be staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle by the BBC and BBC Studios, with several thousand pairs of tickets to be made available via public ballot.

The Coronation Big Lunch, at which neighbours and communities are invited to share food and fun together, will take place across the country on the same date. On Monday, 8th May 2023, members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas.

Their Majesties The King and The Queen Consort hope the Coronation Weekend will provide an opportunity to spend time and celebrate with friends, families and communities across the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth. Their Majesties are looking forward to marking the occasion with the public throughout 2023.

To read the full details visit www.royal.uk/coronation-weekend-plans-announced



Did you know, we are also on twitter?
Follow us @ twitter.com/mss_msupport

thewarriorprogramme

The Warrior Programme is a personal motivation and training programme. The course teaches individuals how to take control of their life, and how to increase confidence, motivation and focus, enabling participants to create a healthy, independent and balanced life style. The programme is particularly suitable for ex Service and Serving personnel in transition post operations.

The programme enables individuals to manage their emotions and to develop the resilience, focus and motivation to succeed in today's world. The programme has been developed over the last fifteen years to meet the demands and challenges experienced by past and present members of the armed forces and their families.

To find out more click on any of the categories below:

SERVING PERSONNEL

FAMILIES OF SERVING PERSONNEL

VETERANS

VETERANS' FAMILIES

COURSE CALENDAR

We are now running both online courses which run for 5 days and residential courses which run for 3 days.

We have developed our online resource to support those individuals who are waiting to attend the programme. Once you have registered your interest with us and spoken to a Coordinator you will be able to access these modules. You will also receive invitations to join regular online sessions via Zoom.

We have also developed an online resource to enable all existing participants to continue to embed the techniques taught on the Programme and are running regular training via Facebook live and Zoom. We advertise all these sessions by email and on the Facebook closed site. If you do not currently receive regular invitations, and would like to do so, please contact us at enquiries@warriorprogramme.org.uk.

Thank you for your continued support, stay safe and best wishes.

The Warrior Team.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK, CALL FREEPHONE:

0808 801 08 98

OR CLICK ON [CONTACT US](#) AND SEND US A MESSAGE.

Voter ID required at Polling Stations

What is this?

From 4th May 2023, the elections act 2022 requires that all voters on the register of electors will have to show valid photographic evidence of identity before being given a ballot paper.

Many different forms of photographic ID including your passport, driving licence as well as a blue badge or an oyster 60+ card and several others will be accepted.

There will be many local elections in May across the UK, so it is important to be prepared.

From October 2023 it will also apply to UK General elections.

If you don't have accepted photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

To find out all about accepted forms of photo ID and how to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate, and what to expect on polling day click the link below:

The
Electoral
Commission



Patient Talk

Can hydroxychloroquine delay disability in Primary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis?

A University of Calgary study has found promising results for the generic drug [hydroxychloroquine](#) when used to treat the evolution of disability in primary progressive multiple sclerosis, the least treatable form of the autoimmune disease.

Cumming School of Medicine research teams led by Dr Marcus Koch, MD, PhD, and Dr Wee Yong, PhD, found hydroxychloroquine helped to slow the worsening of disability during an 18-month study involving participants at the MS clinic in Calgary. The research was published in [Annals of Neurology](#).

Hydroxychloroquine is an anti-malaria medication more commonly used to manage the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis and autoimmune conditions such as lupus.

Dr Yong's research team, has been screening a large number of generic drugs over several years and the results with hydroxychloroquine show some promise. Read the full article here:

<https://patienttalk.org/study-finds-hydroxychloroquine-delays-disability-for-least-treatable-form-of-multiple-sclerosis/>



Help to celebrate the 30th birthday of the MS Trust by joining team MS Trust and cycling between two of the worlds most iconic capital cities. This July, join fellow fundraisers on an adventure that will take you all the way to the Eiffel tower while raising vital funds to support people with MS.

Sign up for London to Paris cycle 2023

Women and MS



Ladies, of course you don't need to be told that MS has different implications for women, in terms of periods, the menopause and having children.

However, you may still find it useful to visit this section of the MS Society website which contains virtually everything you need to know about Women and MS.

Women are almost three times more likely to get MS than men.

What are the symptoms of MS in women?

The [symptoms of MS](#) in women are the same as they can be in men. They can include:

- [fatigue](#)
- [pain](#)
- [muscle spasms or stiffness](#)
- [bladder problems](#)
- and changes to [memory or thinking](#).

Helpful resources

From symptoms and treatments to accessing care and support, our booklets and factsheets are packed full of information and tips on living well with MS.

You can download them from our website or [order copies from our online shop](#).

[Browse our publications](#)

- [Read more about pregnancy and fertility](#)
- [Read more about periods and contraception](#)
- [Pregnancy and birth](#)
- [More about sex and MS for women](#)
- [Read about menopause and MS](#)

Questions about MS? Our MS Helpline is here for you: **0808 800 8000**

CALVERT TRUST REPORT

Julie and Jack Russell visit 20 - 22 Jan 2023

Introduction

Julie Russell accepted an opportunity to visit Calvert Trust Lakes on behalf of Robert Munns and Oceans of Hope as a recce before a planned visit in June 2023 to make use of their accessible sailing facilities. Mutual Support have been offered 10 places for the event in June so this acts as a first call out for Mutual Support potential attendees. We would also like to gauge the feelings of our members towards Mutual Support organising further opportunities to attend Calvert Trust either in the Lake District or at its other venue in Exmoor.



Hypothesis

Julie and Jack Russell attended Calvert Trust on behalf of Oceans of Hope to ascertain Sailing Services provision at the centre. Additionally we were keen to report on the Hotel Services and other available facilities including alternative activities available at the Calvert Trust and its outlying sites.

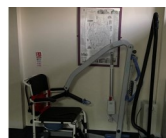
Programme

1. Arrived PM Friday 20th: Issued accommodation and receive Safety Brief and Site Tour from Duty Instructor LOU.
2. Saturday 21st: Day of Activities and Facilities Awareness.
3. Sunday AM. Further activities, wash up and clear accommodation.

Accommodation.



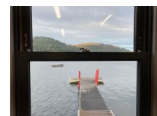
Within lower and Upper Byres with accessible access at both levels with a lift between and up to the communal recreational facilities above. A range of accessible rooms though none with track hoists but mobile hoists are situated on each floor.



The duty instructor is available 24/7 through communications within Reception. All standard Health and Safety features and notices in place.

Sailing.

A boathouse with accessible facilities, wheelchair access and two jetty hoists. Transport to the lake using wheelchair accessible minibus.



A range of sailing vessels including larger ones with adaptive seating available for hoisted users. Smaller vessels for 1-2 persons and larger ones for up to 6 and one accessible Catamaran on Lake Windermere for a day sail party of 10.



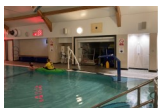
Dining and Communal Facilities.



Communal dining facility though there are individual rooms for quiet individual dining if necessary. Fully adaptive catering to health and personal requirements with well signposted notifications and advice. A communal lounge with licensed “Tuck Shop” though own supplies are permitted.



Other Activities.



An accessible (Ceiling Track and Dunker) “Hydrotherapy” swimming pool with Media controller for lighting and music including underwater.



Various other fully adaptive and challenging activities both within and without the centre. These include Archery, High Ropes, Climbing, Walking, Horse Riding, Canoeing. All activities are fully Centre instructor led with excellent safety briefings and monitoring.



Results.

Our stay provided a great insight into the centre's objectives, facilities and professional standards with the following observations:

1. Staff were welcoming, friendly and suitably experienced and qualified to deliver safe, enjoyable and challenging outdoor activities in magnificent surroundings.
2. All accommodations, activities and equipment meet Calvert Trust Objective to make the Lakes and Challenging Outdoor Activity accessible for all.
3. The range of available Sailing Vessels and Adaptive Equipment should enable Oceans of Hope to deliver safe, accessible and cost effective sailing experiences during its planned visit in June. Mutual Support has 10 places on this visit.

Conclusion.

Julie and Jack enjoyed their stay with the Calvert Trust and commended the centre for its excellent focus on providing safe but challenging Outdoor and Indoor activities for different ability groups. All aspects of our stay were delivered by extremely pleasant, personable and willing staff. The centre facilities and staff seem entirely capable to support the delivery of accessible sailing for Oceans of Hope in June. Calvert Trust has the ability to offer challenging Activities to members of Mutual Support. We will likely conduct a survey to ascertain whether members would like us to organise future visits for this type of activity. Feedback to Julie or Jack Russell would be welcomed, email:

financevolunteer@mutual_support.org.uk

or

adminvolunteer@mutual_support.org.uk

NB: There would be cost implications for attendees though we would attempt to obtain grant funding towards these costs eg. June Cost per person is three nights £360 and seven nights £840.

We all know the military attitude, to 'crack on' (with whatever equipment or situation you are in) and for most of us it is also reflected in our personal lives too. Most of us will 'carry on' doing our duty when at times it becomes too difficult, which was certainly the case with Angie and myself. The MS Nurse had been concerned that, when the PA had to cut her hours down to three mornings a week or off sick, Angie was not getting proper care anymore. The MS Nurse, Sue, visited us early last year and we had a heart-to-heart talk. Things were getting on top of me; my ability to care for Angie wasn't as good as it used to be; I admitted that I was at my wits end. Our good friend Julie and Jack Russell had told us about the NHS Continuing Health Care (NHS CHC) and sent me a booklet to read and they both encouraged us to get support. Sue also sent us information about the NHS CHC. Angie and I decided that, to get regular morning and night care we should move forward with this. Sue started the ball rolling.

We were invited to the Oxfordshire Centre for Enablement (OCE) a couple of weeks after our meeting with Sue. A very sympathetic clinician went through the procedure and then ticked off a matrix on the Screening Checklist to see if Angie was eligible for NHS CHC. This took about an hour or so, the results were sent to us, and were a few days later discussed over the phone with the local Healthcare manager. Here's a warning; because Angie took the call without me being present her comments made it sound like the situation here was better than it actually was and the healthcare manager dropped a point or two from the original screening checklist. Angie wasn't aware that the phone call was to discuss the original results from the meeting at the OCE. Nevertheless, in essence it did not change the result that Angie could be considered for the next step.

Stage two of the assessment process took place in our home. In attendance were the healthcare manager, a social worker, Sue our lovely MS Nurse and Angie's PA, Stacey. The interview took three hours and was quite hard graft, especially for Angie who got very tired after two hours but she was determined that the meeting was successfully concluded. As always, Stacey was worth her weight in gold, explaining accurately how we cared for Angie and what her health requirements were on a daily basis. It was important to stress any health aspects during the consultation. If it was decided that her requirements were social needs rather than health needs, then these could be supplied by the council, however they are means tested and you might be expected to cough up the payment for social care. If it is argued successfully that support to care for health is paramount then the NHS will fund it.

Well, it appeared that we were successful in our application for NHS CHC and she now has professional carers in the mornings and evenings. We even have an element financed of eight hours per week respite for me to get out and about on my own, should I need it, plus up to 90 minutes at lunchtime if required. The cons are that we don't know who will be visiting (there are dozens of visitors) but the pros are that two carers will visit morning and evening without fail. So, those members who are still 'cracking on', 'carrying on', or 'muddling through' and who do, in reality, need some help, can I suggest you discuss this with your MS Nurse when you have your next appointment with them. It certainly relieves some of the stress and strain.

Continued.....

Finally, one top tip I cannot stress enough is to keep a detailed diary of the daily life with all the healthcare issues that occur, as documentary evidence is particularly important to support your case for NHS CHC.



Membership Report

I've got some facts and figures about you, our membership, that you might find interesting. As of 15th Feb, we have the following in our membership:

There are 1162 members, of which 523 have MS. Of those 523, 48 are still serving personnel of the Armed Forces. 376 are former serving and 92 are dependents with MS. We have seven civilians who are honorary members etc with MS.

We have 639 members who do not have MS, 40 of whom are still serving members of the military.

We have had six new members who have joined since our last newsletter in December 2022; two from Lincolnshire, two from Nottinghamshire all of whom are former RAF, and two from Hampshire who have a RN background. A warm welcome to all of them. Their names are:

Paul & Sarah Draper
Peter & Elizabeth Emmins
Sandra & Patrick Connelly

There are five possible new members, who have been in touch via Facebook and have been sent application forms I'm still waiting for them to return the forms.

Sometimes I'm notified of the sad death of one of our members, often by their spouse/partner unsubscribing to our emails, which was the case earlier this month. Regrettably, **Ian Cox**, a member since May 2017 passed away recently. Our thoughts go to his family and friends at this unhappy time.

If you've changed your telephone number, postal address or email address, do keep me updated so we can keep you apprised of upcoming events. Also if you have children listed in the membership list who have now left full time education, can you let me know, as I have to delete them from our list. Of course if you have been blessed with a new baby, then do let me know so I can add them. Our membership list helps us with funding from our military benefactors, who want to know who is still serving, who are veterans, how many dependents we have. The easiest and quickest way is to email me: membershipvolunteer@mutual-support.org.uk

If you are interested, please search for Mutual-Support on Facebook. I will grant you access right away. It's a good place to support each other.

Graham (Hunky Dunk) Duncan
Membership Volunteer

Did you Know

MS is the most common central nervous system condition that affects young adults.

THE BIG EVENT ONE BIG DAY

We're back for 2023!

Bigger and better than ever...

**Join us at an event
near you...**

**The Big Event - NEC,
Birmingham**

Friday 19 & Saturday 20
May

**One Big Day - Eikon,
Northern Ireland**

Saturday 24 June

**One Big Day -
Westpoint, Exeter**

Saturday 22 July

**One Big Day - Yorkshire
Event Centre, Harrogate**

Saturday 12 August

**The Big Event - Royal
Highland Centre,
Edinburgh**

Friday 15 & Saturday 16
September



**Find out
more**



Spring Support & Respite Residential Weekend 12th - 14th May 2023

Because we have to pre-book our group reservation quite far in advance at the HCC we have calculated that it is prudent to reserve 70 places, we base this calculation on previous attendance and how many applications we receive. Of course if demand changes we would adjust future reservations accordingly.

So that we are able to reach as many of our members as possible, our aim is to offer you the opportunity to attend at no personal cost. Although many delegates make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of their stay, and for this we are most grateful. In order for us to do this we have to put in a great deal of work to secure grants from our benefactors and from hard earned personal donations we receive from your fundraising endeavours.

As you might expect, the HCC will still charge us for cancellations. Any cancellations made between four months and fourteen days incur a charge to Mutual Support of 75% of the booking value. Any cancellations made with less than fourteen days notice or any last minute no-shows with incur a charge of 100% of the total booking value.

When preparing for the event, we do keep a reserve list of members who can be offered a reservation in the case of a cancellation. So, if you find that you must cancel your booking. The more notice we are given the better.

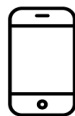
We understand that in some exceptional circumstances, unexpected cancellations are unavoidable and therefore we accept that Mutual Support will incur a financial loss in these cases, but because we rely upon grants and charitable contributions it is very difficult to justify any loss of funds to our benefactors and fundraisers.

We welcome you and really look forward to meeting you all at our residential weekends. Your feedback tells us that you gain a lot of valuable information and benefit in many other ways from attending, especially those of you who have come along for the first time.

You should have received a booking form by now, if not please contact our events manager Jill Watson: eventsmanager@mutual-support.org.uk



Did you know, we are now on Instagram?
Find us by searching for mss msupport



Sheltered housing for women and children

Women of the Armed Forces community may find themselves without somewhere to live or require a place of safety. That's why we've got our Stepping Stone Home.



"It's like a home for me. The staff have done so much to help me."

- Janet, Resident

SSAFA's Stepping Stone home provides a comfortable, secure and female-only place to stay for as long as you need to get back on your feet. From our clean and well-maintained communal spaces and garden to private areas for each resident to make their own, we want our guests to feel like they are in a home from home.

Our experienced Stepping Stone home staff are ready to make your stay as relaxing and comfortable as possible, and are constantly on hand to provide someone to listen to your worries, or provide advice and guidance - whether you plan to move on or reconcile your previous relationship.

If you represent a welfare agency, [you can download the Stepping Stone referral form here](#).



Please remember that we only accept women who have a connection to the Armed Forces - either having served themselves or are the spouse or ex-spouse of someone who has served.

If you wish to speak to SSAFA about any problem or issue facing you as a member of the Armed Forces community - whether a serving soldier, sailor or airman, or a veteran, or one of their family members - then you can call Forcesline and speak to one of our help team.

Forcesline →

Our team is here to listen and not to judge. We can give you useful information and signpost ways to help you.

Forcesline is a free and confidential telephone helpline and email service that provides support for serving (regulars and reserves), ex-Forces and for their families.

SSAFA is outside of the military chain of command, we will listen and we will not judge. [Your privacy when seeking help is fundamentally important to us](#).

You can now talk to our Forcesline advisors online with our live chat service. Please click on the button below to start your conversation:



LIVE CHAT

If you are in need of help **NOW**, and need to speak to someone urgently, then please do not hesitate to call the Samaritans on **116 123** or Veteran's Gateway on **0808 802 1212**



The FCT assists any dependant children whose father or mother has died or has sustained life changing injuries whilst serving as a member of our armed forces. We now include NHS and social care families who have been affected by the Corona virus.

Further details: www.forceschildrenstrust.org.uk

email: denny.wise@forceschildrenstrust.org.uk



We Offer

- **Child bereavement counselling**
- **Group holidays and expeditions**
- **Social events**
- **Educational visits, educational support**

As a charity we are devoted to working together to assist any dependent children who are in need, The FCT, by reason of its aims and size, has the flexibility and ability to make decisions and offer help as needed, with minimum fuss and consequent time loss.

Forces Children's Trust on
Noel Edmond's
Christmas Presents



Find us on social media:



Facebook



Twitter

The FCT has an adult member who is specifically responsible for children, young people and child protection.

This person's name is: **Caroline Parry**. She can be contacted on **07957 158 598**.

Registered Office: Quaver's Rest, 65 Shawley Way, Epsom Downs, Surrey, KT18 5PD

REORG



OUR MISSION:

TO HELP THOSE WHO HELPED US.

We create safe environments through functional fitness and jiu-jitsu for **veterans**, military and emergency services personnel to support their physical and mental wellbeing.

WHY REORG

THE PROBLEM:

The challenges of frontline duty can leave military personnel and first responders facing severe mental and physical difficulties. Problems often get worse once they leave the service and no longer have the camaraderie and support of colleagues.

THE SOLUTION:

Practicing jiu-jitsu and/or functional fitness can make a massive difference in so many different ways. It gives a healthy outlet for your energy and gets you training with a group of like-minded people who are focused on the same goal. This small step can be a life saver.



BECOME A MEMBER

If you are a veteran or member of our armed/emergency services and would like to give jiu-jitsu and its lifestyle a try, please get in touch and we will do everything we can to support your journey or other fitness journeys.

REGISTER NOW



Join an Oceans of hope challenge

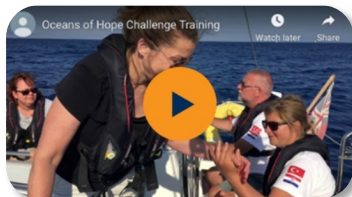
Our Challenges are open to all people with MS. They are a chance to meet like-minded people, defy your limitations and ask yourself “what I can achieve?” On board, you’ll be an integral member of the crew, contributing to an exhilarating sailing experience.

We offer 3 levels of Challenge to suit all ages and abilities. We also have places for carers within our Day Challenge programme on board *Spirit of Scott Bader*.

Watch the video to explore the experience of sailing with us.

Contact:

info@oceansofhope.co.uk



GRANTS AVAILABLE TO HELP WITH COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS



The increases in everyday living costs have impacted the majority of society, and the Armed Forces community is no exception. To try and help veterans and their families through these uncertain times, the RBL has introduced a new Cost of Living Grants Programme, which includes energy-cost top-ups worth up to £200 per month, depending on financial circumstances. The scheme can also assist with one-off expenses such as school uniforms, kitchen appliances and digital-access equipment. To find out if you're eligible or to submit an application, visit the portal at rbl.org.uk/costofliving



MS-TV is a YouTube channel for young people affected by MS

Our videos cover topics like...

MS Symptoms and how they might affect you.
Talking to your mates about MS.
MS and your emotions.
And loads more.

[Explore MSTV YouTube videos](#)



Military families without heating to get increase in compensation

Military Wife campaigner says ‘Service housing maintenance system is still in chaos’

The daily compensation given to military families experiencing a loss of heating in their service accommodation is to rise from £1 to £20, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has announced. [Read more »](#)



We bring people and dogs together to help make life possible

At Dogs for Good, we train dogs to help people affected by disability, dementia, autism, and other conditions and mental-health challenges to live happier, healthier, more independent lives. These are dogs that open doors to connect people and bring families together. Dogs that help make everyday life possible in so many ways.



Could we help you?

Find out how you or someone you know could benefit from our services, whether in a partnership, family or community setting

[**Find out more**](#)



Apply for your Veterans Badge

[Apply for a veterans badge](#)

[Apply for a medal](#)

[Replace a badge or medal](#)

[Apply for a UK merchant seafarers veterans badge](#)

[Apply for a UK merchant navy medal](#)



Mutual Support would like to thank these charities and everyone else who support us; your contributions enable us to do the good work that we do - Thank You.



**GREENWICH
HOSPITAL**
SUPPORTING THE ROYAL NAVY SINCE 1694



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**



The Army's National Charity



THE HOBSON CHARITY

A GRANT GIVING CHARITY



**Cobseo
The Confederation
of Service Charities**

MUTUAL SUPPORT COORDINATING TEAM & VOLUNTEER LIST

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Allocated Events Volunteer (3) Childcare	eventsvolunteer_03@mutual-support.org.uk
Laura Lawrence Events Volunteer (4) Speakers	07413 564 699 eventsvolunteer_04@mutual-support.org.uk
Rachel Harris Events Volunteer (Virtual Events)	07393 854 330 virtualevents@mutual-support.org.uk
Bill Land Comms Volunteer (Newsletter)	07565 82 62 09 communicationsvolunteer@mutual-support.org.uk
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As at March 2023