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Veteran & Emergency Service Crisis Helpline

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| ANNUAL REPORT  2020 |

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| SAPPER SUPPORT |  |  |
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# TO OUR supporters

**Letter from the Chair and Chief Executive Officer**

Since our inception in late 2014, we strive to do the best for those who make contact with Sapper Support. The current veteran community within Great Britain stands at around 2.4 million (taken from MOD figures in 2017) and reside all across the country. They range in age, race and sex, but are predominantly white, with only 1% of these being BAME and our staff reflects this.

Calls are steadily on the rise, with more and more contact being made through our text facility and other social media formats (Twitter, Facebook, Website and Messenger)

As of 1st December 2019, we will be actively recording where our staff signpost our callers to. This will allow us to record measurable statistics and show links to other charities and organizations.

Our unpaid volunteers continue to be appraised on a quarterly basis by our clinical expert, to determine if they themselves are affected by the calls they take. And if so, they can quickly be given additional support and rest. 5 more volunteers are due to come on line in early 2020.

We are fully committed to measuring and assessing the performance of our staff to maintain their competency and ability. This is done through a ‘secret caller’ program.

Currently, our volunteers are situated within the full length of England and Scotland. Each one of our 12 volunteers are giving around 8 hours of coverage per day/night. This gives us a more than adequate coverage rate to enable a 24:7 service. This also allows for personal time, work and ‘unavailable’.

Sapper Support is at present, a small charity giving a unique service to veterans and 999 employees with mental health issues. We understand and appreciate our place within this sector. Creating partnerships and initiatives with those more mature than us in this field is paramount to our growth and development. We are at a point now where we must utilize the skills and experience of those around us. I feel this will lead to an alliance where our unique service can be incorporated into those around us, therefore creating a system that catches, signposts and provides long term treatment for those demographics we cater for.

**Our aims**

To give help in a time of crisis

To always be available

To be staffed by veterans and Emergency service personnel

**Our goals**

To give emotional support 24:7

To signpost to our partners and other appropriate organizations

To fund private assessments to determine a diagnosis and therefore speed up access to treatment.

To reduce the stigma associated with Mental Health illnesses

**Our strategy**

We are a Crisis helpline for the Serving, Veteran and Emergency Services.

Sapper Support is here to help people today, before they get to the point where they break.

In the autumn of 2014 whilst attending the Remembrance parade at the Cenotaph in London, we learnt of the untimely death of a brother Sapper. It’s always sad when a young life ends, but even more sad when you learn that person took their own life. He had been suffering from PTSD. The suffering that PTSD causes is well documented but only truly appreciated by those it affects and those friends and family who witness its corrosive grip.

Initially designed to help Sappers, the volume of calls we have received and the different number of cap Badges meant that we needed to adapt quickly. With the increasing number of 999 personnel contacting us, we are now a multi-service charity.

We now have a facility to help with early diagnosis, pay for that all-important initial assessment. Once diagnosed, treatment can begin.

However, we are not solely limited to helping those with PTSD. There are other forms of mental health issues which we can help with by giving emotional, physical, financial support and signposting to other agencies.

Our volunteers are not doctors, councilors or health professionals. They are Sappers who speak the lingo of the British squaddie, have served in all the theatres of war from Iraq’s Desert Storm to modern day Afghanistan.

We are not here to judge, we are here to listen, chat and help.

**Operational Highlights**

At present the phone lines are all privately funded by sponsors. In 2019 we secured financial backing from Consortia Securities. In 2020 this will be taken over by Sterling Defence, however we are currently in talks with a major tele-communications company who have offered to sponsor us. This brings many benefits to the way we work. The ability to record calls will give us auditability and remove the need to keep written notes on each call. Access to the latest handsets and new facilities to aid our call handlers in follow up calls is also extremely exciting.

The volunteers that staff our phones have (without knowing it) set the bar very high. That being said, all future volunteers must aspire to reach and maintain these standards and we will endeavor to give as much training and support as is necessary.

We have already started this process by promoting Mr. Mick Hodgeson to Training and Development Officer. Mick will still assume his role as a call handler (he is our most prolific handler and has helped over 200 callers since joining the team) and this experience makes him the ideal candidate for this role. Along with Mick training on the day to day duties and who, what and where to sign post, all volunteers will attend a mental health awareness course facilitated by MIND. To make sure our call-handlers are cared for, they all have a one to one session with our clinical psychiatrist every 3 months. This is private and the operators have said this can be very beneficial.

We have seen an increase in the past 6 months of clients needing a clinical referral. This is something unique to Sapper Support. We are in a position where we can fund a private assessment to determine a diagnosis and therefore speed up access to treatment. A referral from a G.P. can take up to 6 months. No one has had to wait more than 2 weeks when given aid by Sapper Support

(Please see later Psychiatric Referrals)

We are looking to work closely with other agencies, some of which we already sign post to such as The Firefighters Charity, SSAFA, The Royal Engineers Association, The UK breakfast club, and Team Rubicon UK. This sign posting is reciprocated, with all agencies advising individuals in crisis to call Sapper Support.

We are currently in negotiations with Combat Stress, Help 4 heroes, Heads Together and SSAFA France

The opportunity to work more closely with military associations will provide even more access to veterans and serving personnel in need, as well as promote the work we do and the services we can offer.

At the time of creating this report the UK is in lock down (Covid – 19) and the Veterans Helpline administered by Gov.UK had been suspended. We at Sapper Support have approached the governmental department responsible for this, to use our service in the interim period.

**Psychiatric Referrals**

Sapper Support continues to lead the way in providing funding for initial assessments of callers who are self-diagnosing. The truth behind self-diagnosing is that it can ultimately lead to homelessness and death. Self-diagnosis leads to self-medication. The only medication freely available is alcohol and drugs. This in turn leads to functioning alcoholics and drug uses. Which in turn leads to non-functioning alcoholics and drug users. These individuals then go on to lose employment, family and their homes, succumbing to their lifestyle.

By funding private assessments to determine a diagnosis, we are realistically saving people’s lives. This is a service totally unique to Sapper Support and something we will strive to expand on in the future. The cost can range from £90 to £600 dependent on the topographical location of the individual. We have however put a cap on the fee at £325, as experience has shown this is easily achievable in most areas.

Expanding the scope of how we help our callers has also been an issue this year. Calls have been taken in 2019, which have resulted in changes to the way in which we deal with certain criteria. The mental well-being of our demographics is paramount to us. This mental well-being can be influenced greatly by their home life and family members.

An example of this is as follows:

Caller A contacted us in 2019 requesting help as he wasn’t sleeping and was in struggling to cope. It transpired that his daughter was having mental issues of her own and was being passed around NHS departments without any form of treatment and this was having a negative impact on both their well-being. After hearing the details of this case, we (the trustees) decided that to give aid to Caller A we must give aid to his daughter. So, we decided to fund a series of counselling sessions for his daughter up to, but not exceeding the value of £500. This had the desired effect we were hoping for. All parties are now in a much better place regarding their mental health and we have adopted this practice as yet another service we provide.

**Financial Report**

The Financial plan, forecast to 2023 is predicated on a number of factors, although primarily the rationale is that Sapper Support ought to operating on a small surplus, distributing income to clients as effectively as possible.  Given the current uncertain climate, despite some volatility in donations, the single largest source, it was felt prudent to have this return to a more historic norm, with a small inflationary increase.

From an expenditure perspective, it was important to address two areas in the expense line: Advertising and Promotional materials.  Advertising in the early stages of Sapper Support came in the form of a number of Sponsorships.  While effective in part, it is felt with the recently announced support of Vodafone and the engagement of a number of key Patrons, that a change in direction could be affective, with far reduced cost.  In addition to the key sponsorships, greater use will be made of social media.

In addition, in 2018, £26,749 was incurred under Promotional material. A large part of this is attributed to the donation made by Sapper Support to the PTSD Memorial at The National Arboretum.  This has attracted national interest and raised the profile of Sapper Support significantly.  It also ought to be added that these donations were made with the express purpose of an onward donation to the establishment of the memorial.  According in 2017 we see an uptick, in donations that then reduce to a lower level from 2018 onwards. At the time, support to the only PTSD Memorial in the UK was a central plank of the Sapper Support mission statement.  However, after this key success, greater emphasis was now to be placed on the direct support to clients.

A detailed breakdown of Sapper Supports finances can be found in Appendix A

**Call log information breakdown**

**Future initiatives**

Sapper Support will continue to grow and bolster its infra-structure for the inevitable growth in the number of calls we will have to deal with. With this in mind we have 5 new volunteers starting early in 2020. With projected staffing figures to raise to/or above 20 by 2021.

As we grow, we will also need dedicated admin support and this will impact on our finances, so we will endeavor to look at available funding options.

When individuals leave the military, they don’t always settle in the UK. We have had contact from veterans in the USA, Germany, Cyprus, New Zealand and Australia. We are keen to give these veterans a life-line should they need it. We are looking at setting up an international service, linked directly tour existing service. This will initially be aimed at the USA and Germany and depending upon its success will be rolled out to further destinations.

We are striving to harness our digital connection with other signposting sites. For example, the NHS and MIND have been contacted and will have links to the Sapper Support webpage and contact details for individuals to reach us when needed. Other organizations and web hosts have been invited to include Sapper Support on their contact/support pages.

Lastly, our main goal is to have ‘regional hubs’ around the UK supported by a national framework.

The benefits of this to our callers are many. Shared accent, local knowledge, access to local resources and opportunities for face to face visits.

**Fundraising Activities Statement**

Our generous supporters include individuals, companies, trusts and public bodies. It is thanks to our supporters that we were able to raise over £20,000 from voluntary donations to invest in reaching more people with our services. Sapper Support fundraises with our supporters’ needs in mind and continue to meet the best standards of practice in the way we work.

Our donor promise sets out our aim to be open, fair and honest in the way we engage with supporters. Our remaining outsourced activity includes the recruitment of new supporters who choose to give through sponsorship.

Managing Communications and protecting people it is important to Sapper Support that supporters trust our communications. We ask supporters for their preferences as to how we communicate with them. We provide choice and if supporters no longer wish to hear from us, we will respect their wishes. Over the last year we have gathered feedback from over 1,700 supporters to understand what supporters need and want and how we can improve the supporter experience. This insight has been used to improve the way we engage and communicate with our supporters. We have strengthened our data management approach and provide supporters with greater choice, control and trust in how they engage with Sapper Support. We will continue to adopt GDPR compliant working practices. We will continue to lead on best practice fundraising to ensure we deliver and exceed supporter expectations.

**Risks and uncertainties**

The board of Trustees’ is ultimately responsible for risk management.

A comprehensive annual planning and budgeting process is approved by the Board, during which a thorough assessment of key external and internal risks is undertaken. The Board also receives risk evaluations on any major new areas of activity.

Set out below are details of the top five most significant risks identified after a SWOT analysis was conducted:

1. Business plan – to be an enduring report.
2. Business Strategy – to set out our future aspirations.
3. Financial plan – Forecast of income and revenue, quarterly and 5-year financial targets (how to achieve these).
4. Performance metric – CPD of call takers and staff, measurement of effect.
5. Communications and marketing – Reach out to other charities and organisations to have a link or display Sapper Support logos / contact information for individuals to use.

**Incidents and Reporting**

Sapper Support and its Board of Trustees are committed to dealing with incidents and difficult situations efficiently and transparently, and take any such matters seriously.

All call takers have the right to report any bullying, harassment and other areas that they feel appropriate to the CEO or trustee to rectify the situation.

**Awards and Recognition**



2019 Duke of York Community Initiative Award



2019 Best Mental Health Support Charity

**Our Founder and CEO Mr. Tim Evers**

2019 British Citizens Award (BCAh)

2019 Volunteer of the Year – English Veterans Awards

2019 Inspiration of the Year – British Ex Military

in Business Awards

**Reference and administrative details**

**Patron**: Major General D W Southall CBE

**Founder**: Tim Evers

**Company Name**: Sapper Support

**Registered address and principal office:**

1 Scott Lane, Gomersal, West Yorkshire, BD19 4YJ.

**Registered Charity Number**: 1167986

**Website**: [www.sappersupport.com](http://www.sappersupport.com)

**Tel**: 0800 040 7873

**Tel**: 0800 040 7783

**Text**: 07860 018733

**Board of Trustees:**

Tim Evers CEO

Mark Jeffs

Maj (Ret’d) Mike Jenks

Duncan Gordon

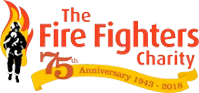
**Donors and Supporters**

We would like to thank all our donors and supporters including those who wish to remain anonymous.

https://sappersupport.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Spon2.png

https://sappersupport.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Spon3.png

https://sappersupport.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Spon4.png







**Appendix A**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **2017 - Actual** | **2018 - Actual** | **2019 - Actual** | **2020 - Plan** | **2021 - Plan** | **2022 - Plan** | **2023 - Plan** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Income** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Donations | 43,055 | 14,178 | 26,973 | 28,069 | 28,630 | 29,203 | 29,787 |
| Just Giving | 14,051 | 7,933 | 13,661 | 11,882 | 12,120 | 12,362 | 12,609 |
| Other | 840 | 0 | 0 | 500 | 1,000 | 1,500 | 2,000 |
|  | **57,946** | **22,111** | **40,634** | **40,451** | **41,750** | **43,065** | **44,396** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Direct Costs** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Individuals Grants | 7,310 | 512 | 0 | 2,607 | 2,500 | 2,500 | 3,000 |
| Advertising and Sponsorship | 2,231 | 2,789 | 9,051 | 4,690 | 3,000 | 3,500 | 4,000 |
| Award Fees and Costs | 0 | 1,092 | 0 | 364 | 500 | 750 | 1,000 |
| Promotional Material | 11,219 | 26,748 | 10,671 | 16,213 | 11,000 | 11,220 | 11,444 |
| Medical and professional fees | 4,108 | 805 | 3,590 | 2,834 | 3,000 | 3,060 | 3,121 |
|  | **24,868** | **31,946** | **23,312** | **26,708** | **20,000** | **21,030** | **22,566** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Net Income** | **33,078** | **-9,835** | **17,322** | **13,743** | **21,750** | **22,035** | **21,831** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Expenditure** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Printing, postage | 736 | 1,210 | 1,089 | 1,111 | 1,133 | 1,156 | 1,179 |
| Insurance | 141 | 144 | 144 | 147 | 150 | 153 | 156 |
| Telephone | 1,003 | 878 | 1,428 | 1,200 | 1,224 | 1,248 | 1,273 |
| Computer costs | 230 | 468 | 824 | 840 | 857 | 874 | 892 |
| Auctioned costs | 281 | 0 | 0 | 200 | 300 | 400 | 500 |
| Travel | 2,474 | 2,908 | 4,455 | 5,000 | 5,500 | 6,000 | 6,500 |
| Subsistence | 746 | 1,421 | 1,107 | 2,000 | 2,200 | 2,500 | 2,700 |
| Sundry Items | 206 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 200 | 300 | 400 |
| Training | 1,200 | 1,391 | 0 | 2,000 | 2,500 | 3,000 | 3,500 |
| Formation Costs | 228 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  | **7,245** | **8,420** | **9,047** | **12,598** | **14,064** | **15,631** | **17,100** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Surplus/Deficit | **25,833** | **-18,255** | **8,275** | **1,145** | **7,686** | **6,404** | **4,731** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Inflation - Bank of England target | 2% |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

