

Veteran & Emergency Service Crisis Helpline



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Tel:0800-040-7873

Tel:0800-040-7783

SAPPER SUPPORT

Email: info@sappersupport.com

Website: www.sappersupport.com



CONTENTS

Message from the CEO...3

Strategy & Vision...4

Our Story...5

Operational Overview...6

Financial Report...9

Performance - Call-log Headlines...10

Future Initiatives...11

Fundraising Activities ...12

Governance...13

Awards & Recognition...14

References...15

Donors & Supporters...16

Appendix A - Accounts...17

TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Since our inception in late 2014, we have always striven to do the very best for all those who reach out to Sapper Support. As a small charity offering a unique service to veterans and 999 employees with mental health issues, we have worked hard this year to consolidate our core foundations; a crisis helpline staffed *by* veterans and emergency service personnel *for* serving, veterans and emergency service personnel.

Calls to Sapper Support are steadily on the rise, with contact increasingly made through our text and social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Website and Messenger). From 1st December 2019, we have recorded where our staff signpost callers to, enabling us to better measure and assess how we link to other charities and organisations. We are also committed to improve and assure our volunteer staff performance, to help maintain their competency and we are working to further monitor this through a 'secret caller' program.

Currently, our volunteers are situated across the full length of England and Scotland. Each one of our 12 unpaid volunteers currently commits around 8 hours of cover per day/night shift enabling us to sustain a 24:7 service. Our unpaid volunteers continue to be appraised on a quarterly basis by a clinical expert, to determine if they are affected by the work they undertake. Where help is needed, they are afforded additional support and rested. Five more volunteers are due to come on-line in 2020.

As a small charity offering a niche service we fully understand and appreciate our place within the wider sector and are committed to creating partnerships and initiatives with those more mature than ourselves; such engagement will underpin our growth and development as we seek to better harness the skills and experience of those around us. Future success will therefore depend much on the alliances and partnerships we build as we seek to better integrate our service with others. Together we can help support the system that catches, signposts and provides long term treatment for the veteran community we serve.

Tim Evers

STRATEGY & VISION

We are a crisis helpline staffed *by* veterans and emergency service personnel *for* serving, veterans and emergency service personnel. Our helpline seeks to help those in need in their time of crisis, before they break; to catch them before they fall.

Sapper Support is staffed by volunteers. They are not doctors, councilors or health professionals; they are simply Sappers who speak the lingo of the British soldier, having served in all the theatres of war from Iraq's Desert Storm to modern day Afghanistan.

Our crisis helpline is not here to judge, it is here to listen, to chat and to help.

Our Aim

- **To help and support in time of crisis - available always, 24:7**

Our Goals

- **To signpost those in need, to our partners and other appropriate organisations**
- **To support private assessments where needed; to help enable professional diagnosis and speed access to treatment.**
- **To reduce the stigma associated with Mental Health illnesses**

Our Story

In the autumn of 2014 whilst attending the Remembrance parade at the London Cenotaph, we learnt of the untimely death of a fellow Sapper. It's always sad when a young life ends, but more tragically so when you learn that a person had been suffering from PTSD and had taken their own life.

The suffering PTSD causes is well documented but perhaps only truly appreciated by those it directly affects and by the family and friends who witness its corrosive grip at close hand. We were determined to help and offer an immediate lifeline to those facing crisis and Sapper Support was born.

Whilst initially conceived to help Sappers, it soon became very clear that our callers hailed from every cap-badge. With an increasing number of emergency services personnel contacting us, we had effectively become a multi-service charity. Whilst our volunteer staff do not directly offer medical advice, we have a facility to enable professional diagnosis and support that all-important initial assessment. Such diagnosis is often key to help unlock engagement and treatment from mainstream national services.

Our helpline is not solely limited to helping those with PTSD and we seek to offer support to callers as required. This may range from other forms of mental health to signposting those who require emotional, physical or financial support to the right agencies.

Operational Overview

Signposting.

As a crisis helpline, we are acutely aware of the importance in linking those in need to long term professional support. Signposting our callers to the right organisation is key and we are actively reaching out to develop closer links with those agencies to whom we routinely reference. Organisations range from SSAFA to The Firefighters Charity and from The Royal Engineers Association to The UK Breakfast Club, and Team Rubicon UK. We are currently in discussions with Combat Stress, Help 4 Heroes, Heads Together and SSAFA France.

We are keen and fully committed to work closer with all established military associations who provide support to both veterans and serving personnel in need, whilst promoting the work we do and the services we offer.

At time of writing this report the UK remains in Covid-19 lock down with the Veterans Helpline administered by Gov.UK suspended. Throughout this period, we remain wholly committed to sustain Sapper Support to help mitigate any impact from the suspension of the Veterans Helpline service.

Staff Support.

We are very proud that our volunteer helpline staffs have set a very bar in service standard to date and our staff focus going forward is to ensure we maintain and sustain these standards, both for current staff and our new volunteers. To enable this, we aim to formalise our staff training and support. Key to this is the appointment of a Training and Development Officer. Mr Mick Hodgeson has enjoyed prolific success as a helpline volunteer, having successfully fielded over 200 crisis callers, and his experience makes ideal for this responsibility and role.

In addition to this in-house induction, top-up training and service standard assurance, all our volunteers now attend a mandatory mental health awareness course provided by MIND. To further ensure our call-handlers are cared for, all receive a one to one session with a clinical

psychiatrist every 3 months. All our helpline volunteers have indicated this support for their personal welfare is hugely beneficial and most welcomed.

Telephony Support.

Our phone lines are privately funded with financial backing for our telephony secured in 2019 from Consortia Securities who will be part of Sterling Defence in 2020. We are currently discussing further sponsorship with a major telecommunications provider. We aim to better harness technology to improve the way we work. We plan to digitally record calls to give full audit accountability and thereby remove the need to keep written notes on each call. Access to the latest hardware and digital facilities to aid our volunteer helpline staff in any follow up calls will further professionalise our helpline service and offers extremely exciting opportunities.

Psychiatric Referrals

Sapper Support also has the ability to enable a clinical referral. Where need is urgent or risk is high, we have funded private professional clinical assessments to enable diagnosis and speed access to treatment.

This service has proven key for a number of callers who have self-diagnosed. We understand it is well established that self-diagnosis often leads to self-medication with so often the only medication freely available being alcohol and drugs. We routinely see such situations in many of our callers where those in crisis risk losing employment, family and home.

By enabling access to a professional diagnosis, Sapper Support can engage and offer professional referral at last safe moment, before a caller reaches a point of no return. The service is key to Sapper Support and something we strive to resource further in the future. Referrals are currently capped at £325 as experience has shown this is readily achievable in most areas.

A Case Study Example.

Caller 'A', a military veteran contacted us in 2019 requesting help; he wasn't sleeping and was struggling to cope with life. It transpired his daughter was suffering mental issues of her own and was struggling to gain access to NHS treatment. After hearing the details of this case, we were clear that to give aid to Caller A we should seek to support his daughter. We subsequently funded a series of professional counselling sessions for his daughter which had a significantly positive effect on the family. 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

Our Financial plan, forecast to 2023 is predicated on a number of factors, although our primarily rationale remains for Sapper Support to operate with a small surplus in order to distribute income to clients as effectively as possible. Given the current uncertain climate and volatility in donations, we have planned with a prudent approach for the future and set a more modest scale of financial growth with a small inflationary increase.

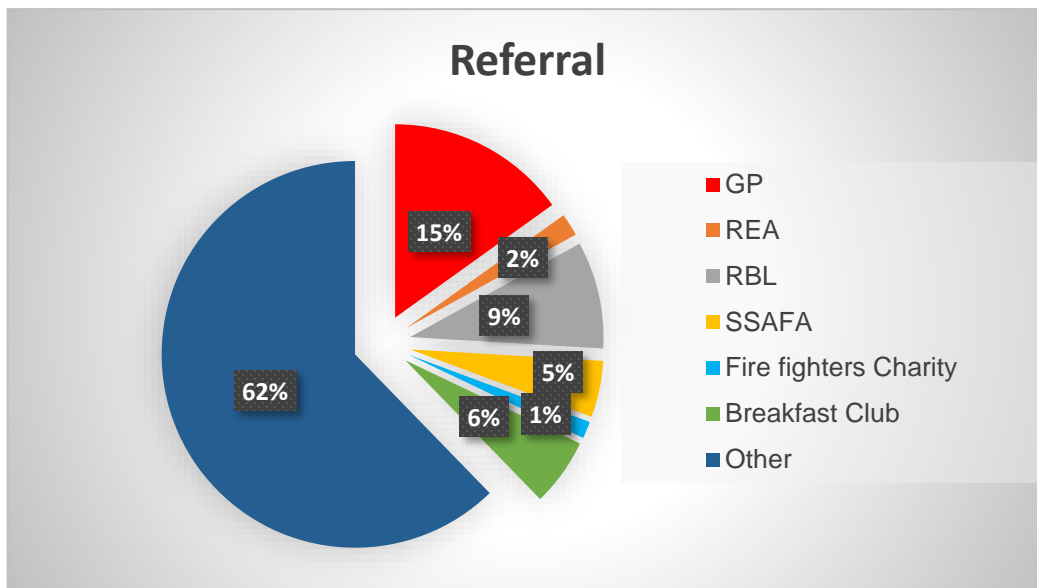
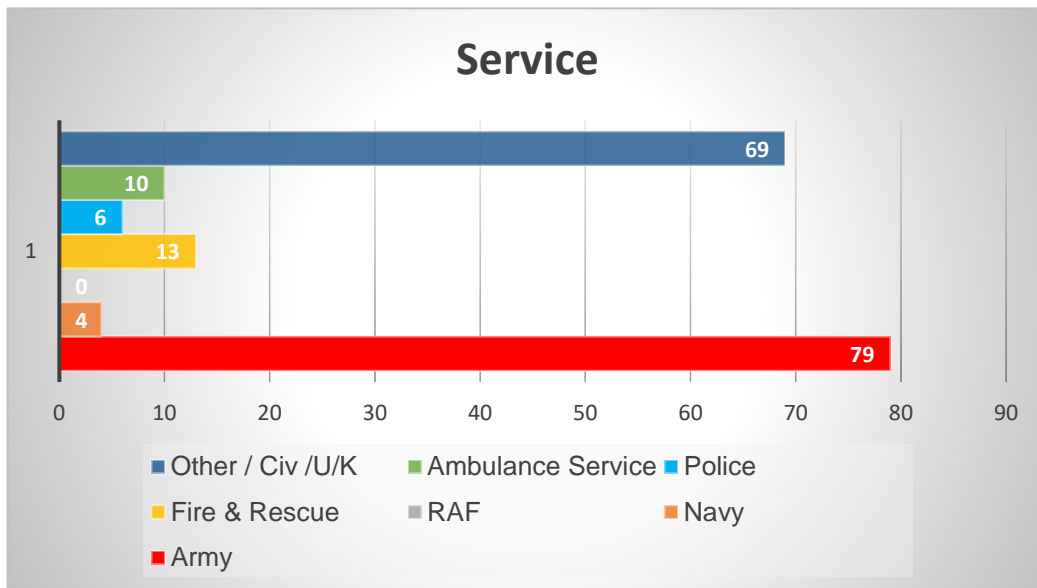
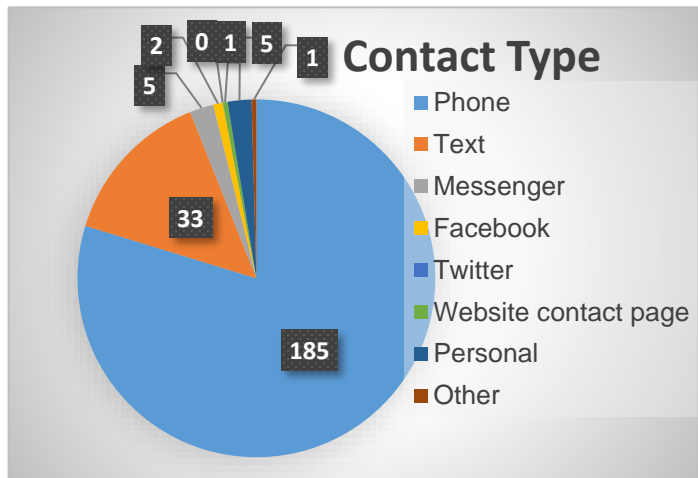
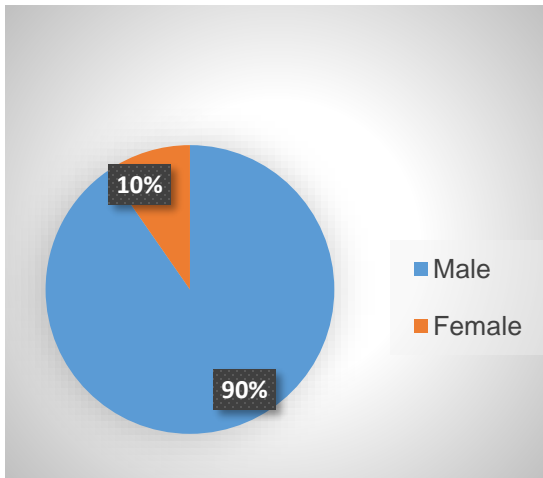
We have now addressed two key areas in our expenditure: Advertising and Promotional materials. Advertising in the early stages of Sapper Support came in the form of a number of Sponsorships. While effective in part, it is felt with the potential offered from sponsorship with a major telecommunications provider 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 2018, £26,749 was incurred under Promotional material with the majority 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 is important to note that sponsor donations were made with the express purpose of an onward donation to the establishment of the memorial. This may be seen in the significantly increased donations in 2017, followed by a return 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.

To the future, Sapper Support is committed to focus emphasis on direct support to clients whilst achieving its marketing and publicity needs through more modest and cost effective means.

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

Performance - Call Log Headlines



Future Initiatives

Sapper Support is committed to strengthen its core foundations in order to broaden and deepen the professional service we provide to our callers in need. We have 5 new volunteers starting this year which increases the robustness of our helpline network. We aspire to reach a helpdesk national network of 20 volunteer staff by 2021. As we grow, we are reviewing how we may better deliver dedicated administrative support to our volunteers and the financial implications from any future need for part time support staff.

We are striving to better harness our digital connection with key stakeholders in the sector. We are committed to improve how we signpost callers and we have commenced discussions with NHS, Public Health England and MIND to support this. We are also reaching out to Regimental Associations to consider appropriate digital links to the Sapper Support webpage and contact details for individuals to reach us when needed.

We are acutely aware of the significant benefits afforded by a 'regional hub' approach to our helpline, supported by a national framework and this forms part of our future plans. The benefits of this to our callers are many: shared accent, local knowledge and access to local resources are key.

We are also clear that our veteran community does not always settle in the UK and we have had contact from veterans in the USA, Germany, Cyprus, New Zealand and Australia. We are keen to give these veterans a lifeline should they need it and are reviewing how our helpline service could support our veterans overseas. Options are likely to include a pilot helpline offer to support our veteran community in Germany.

Fundraising Activities

Our generous supporters include individuals, companies, trusts and public bodies. We are hugely grateful for their support which has enabled us to raise over £20,000 from voluntary donations to support those in need of our services.

Sapper Support remains committed to fundraise with our supporters' needs and considerations in mind and we are unreservedly committed to meet the highest standards of practice in the way we work and fundraise.

Our donor promise is to be open, fair and honest in the way we engage with supporters and it is critical 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 individual supporters to understand their wishes 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 also worked hard to strengthen our data management approach and provide supporters with greater choice, control and trust in how they engage with Sapper Support.

Most critically, we continue to ensure our working practices are GDPR compliant as we strive to achieve best practice fundraising to ensure we exceed our supporter expectations.

Governance

Sapper Support is fully committed to strengthen its governance construct. The Board of Trustees' has secured the support of a senior serving Army officer as Patron to the Charity and advisor to the Board and has subsequently taken significant steps to formalise the individual roles and responsibilities of the Trustees.

The Board undertook a comprehensive planning and budgeting review in April 2020 during which a thorough assessment of external and internal risk was completed. The Board is now engaged to review and update the following:

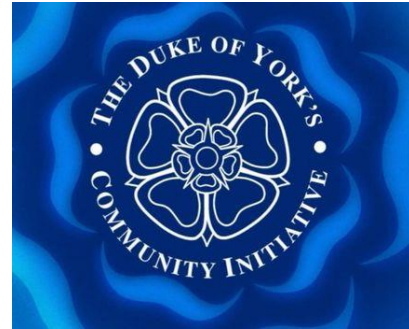
- **Sapper Support Strategy** – an enduring strategy document, nested within the Charity objects with a 10-year horizon.
- **Sapper Support Business Plan** – a long term financial plan with forecast of income and revenue, and expenditure with quarterly review and 5-year financial targets.
- **Sapper Support Operating Model** – A single source document detailing the Sapper Support operating model including:
 - **Staff induction, training and support.**
 - **Performance.** Including calls taken and referred (as measures of activity) and successful outcomes (as measurement of effect).
 - **Helpline Administration and Assurance.** Ranging from telephony support to call logging and GDPR regulatory compliance.
 - **Marketing and Communications.** Three discreet workstrands: engagement and support to sponsors; links and signposting to other charities and organisations; communications with the user community in need.
 - **Risk Management.**

Incidents and Reporting

The Board of Trustees are committed to dealing with incidents 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 Board to rectify the situation.

Awards & 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



References

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

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 & Supporters

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

national express

MORAN
logistics



Appendix A - Accounts

	<u>2017 - Actual</u>	<u>2018 - Actual</u>	<u>2019 - Actual</u>	<u>2020 - Plan</u>	<u>2021 - Plan</u>	<u>2022 - Plan</u>	<u>2023 - Plan</u>
<u>Income</u>							
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
<u>Direct Costs</u>							
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
<u>Expenditure</u>							
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%						

