



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –
OUTDOORS

CHARITY OVERVIEW

October 2019

HighGround, London Scottish House, 95 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2DX
Charity registered in England and Wales 1151225. Company limited by guarantee: 0823 6843.



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –
OUTDOORS

THE NEED

Approximately 14,000 members of the Armed Forces leave every year. It is well recognised across a wealth of research that employment is a critical component of successful transition to civilian life and more importantly that those [individuals] who choose a job as part of a career path, are more likely to be motivated and feel they are progressing. Forces in Mind Trust, (2013) Understanding the transition process for Service personnel returning to civilian life.

Those who join HM Forces are predominantly outdoor people and the land-based sector offers an ever-increasing variety of opportunities for Service Leavers, Reservists and Veterans to use their unique transferable skills learned in the military to pursue jobs, careers and vocational opportunities in the land-based sector in the UK and beyond.

One of the principal challenges to face Service Leavers and Veterans is to be able to identify their transferable skills and then market themselves effectively to employers. In addition there are those for whom the transition to civilian life is not smooth and additional help, guidance and information is required.

“A thoroughly enjoyable and worthwhile week.”

RAF Mental Health Nurse. Still serving.
Rural Week Spring 2019.

VISION

Our vision is to be the leading organisation for the provision of land-based opportunities for all ex-military personnel and Reservists.

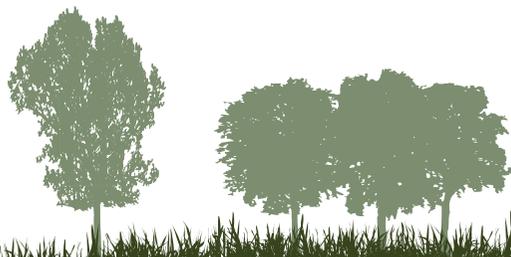
We will soon enter our 7th year of operation and must now look to build partnerships with companies who share our vision to support ex-military personnel into employment and self-employment in the land-based sector where their skills, experience, and values will be appreciated and used to benefit themselves and their employers.

In particular HighGround will:

- > Following the successful transition from Headley Court, provide a Horticultural Therapy service to patients at the new Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) at Stanford Hall.
- > Develop Rural Weeks for Service Leavers, Reservists and Veterans to provide access to expert advice about land-based jobs, careers and vocational opportunities.
- > Provide ongoing formal and informal support for HighGround beneficiaries (HighGrounders) as they continue their journey through transition into civilian life.
- > Collect an evidence base to increase awareness of transition challenges, needs and outcomes which will inform the development of appropriate services.
- > Partnership working is at the core of HighGround's vision and the Charity is developing relationships with further education, work experience, training and employment providers in the land-based sector and is working closely with other Service charities to develop resources for this unique client group.

“Horticultural Therapy has given me the confidence in completing activities whilst standing. I enjoyed the peaceful environment.”

Stanford Hall patient, amputee.



TIMELINE OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

MARCH

HG gets charitable status

JULY

Service Level Agreement between Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) and HG signed.

2013

FEBRUARY

Assistant to Horticultural Therapist at Headley Court appointed.

APRIL

Rural Weeks programme at Plumpton College starts.

2015

FEBRUARY

Three year pilot of Horticultural Therapy service at Headley Court ends. Horticultural Therapy now fully integrated into rehab interventions at DMRC.

MARCH

Rural Weeks programme at Bicton College starts.

APRIL

New Chairman appointed.

2017

JANUARY

Horticultural Therapy service at Stanford Hall fully operational.

Liz Brown appointed as Hon Sec to the Trustees.

Rhodri Atkins becomes Development Board's first Secretary.

MARCH

Rural Weeks programme starts at Bicton College.

2019

APRIL

Pilot Rural Weeks at Dartmoor.

MAY

First Farm Shop for patients at DMRC.

JULY

Friends of HighGround stands at North Devon Show and Ipswich Maritime Festival.

SEPTEMBER

Autumn Rural Week programme starts at Bicton College.

2014

FEBRUARY

Horticultural Therapy service at DMRC starts.

SEPTEMBER

Two Pilot Rural Weeks delivered at Plumpton College.

2016

MARCH

Office-based support service launched.

MAY

Horticultural Therapy service at Headley Court and Rural Weeks programme at Plumpton College continue.

2018

MARCH

Rural Weeks programme at Bicton College begins.

MAY

Therapeutic Gardens Manager for Stanford Hall appointed.

JULY

Jon Chandler joins Board of Trustees.

JULY

Transition to Stanford Hall.



GOING FORWARDS

JANUARY

Rural Business Improvement Manager appointed.

MAY

Friends of HighGround Come and Sing. Exeter Cathedral (tbc).

SUMMER

Rural Employment Manager appointed

AUTUMN

Rural Weeks roll-out to 2nd agricultural college.

WINTER

Corporate Friends event in London.

2020



2021

SPRING

Assistant Horticultural Therapist appointed at DMRC Stanford Hall

Rural Weeks programmes at both ag colleges start.

SUMMER

Friends of HighGround week launched.



WHAT WE DO

Land-based employment, self-employment and vocational opportunities service including Rural Weeks.

WHAT IS THE LAND-BASED SECTOR?

This is a generic term which covers outdoor industries including Land Management; Environmental (outdoor) Design, Production and Leisure; and Animal Care with a special focus on food production.

“ The week gave me space and time to think and relax, focus my mind on the future and decide what exactly I want to do and how to get there.

A wonderful experience, one for which I am extremely thankful.

This is a very diverse area and plenty of opportunities for veterans, with a strong support network of professional like-minded people.”

Lieutenant Royal Navy. Still serving.
Rural Week Summer 2019.

WHY ARE EX MILITARY PEOPLE SO WELL SUITED TO THE LAND-BASED SECTOR?

Military life teaches motivation, problem-solving, teamwork, resilience and adaptability in sometimes rough and often unfamiliar environments.

HighGround helps Service Leavers, Reservists and Veterans to work out what military skills and experience they have, how they will map into the land-based sector and how to access the many opportunities it offers for employment and self-employment.

We have pioneered Rural Weeks, 5 fully residential days at an agricultural college for 10 Service Leavers, Reservists and Veterans to learn about what the land-based sector looks like from subject matters experts; how to access them. Rural Weeks are run by our Rural Employment Manager in conjunction with the delivering agricultural college.

Since we piloted Rural Weeks at Plumpton College in Sussex in 2014, we have delivered 29 Rural Weeks. The Rural Weeks programme at Bickton College is in its 3rd year and plans for roll out to other Landex colleges around the UK are advancing well.



“ BALI is excited to be working with HighGround in promoting opportunities in the landscape industry. The men and women leaving the Military leave with many skills that can easily be transferred to the world of landscaping and are just what BALI employers are looking for.”

Steven Ensell,
Education Officer, British Association of Landscape Industries.

Outcomes following a Rural Week include identifying training courses, arranging work experience or volunteering or in the case of those who are still serving, gaining knowledge, information and contacts to assist with their decision-making during their resettlement and transition back to civilian life.

WORKING WITH LAND-BASED EMPLOYERS.

Our Development Board helps us to connect with employers across the UK who want to offer work experience and employment opportunities to ex military personnel, and recognise the skills and experience they bring to the workplace.

Through Careers in Racing, BALI, the Arboriculture Association, Historic Houses and many more, our links and success stories are developing every day.

OUR FUNDERS



We recently launched the Friends of HighGround (FHG) to bring together individuals and companies who have expressed an interest in supporting HighGround.

For more information about how you can become an FHG, please visit highground-uk.org

HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

Can be defined as ‘The use of plants by a trained professional as a medium through which certain clinically defined goals can be met.’

(THRIVE conference 1999).

In 2014 HighGround started a 3 year pilot at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) Headley Court to test Horticultural Therapy as an intervention to be used in the rehabilitation of injured service personnel.

It was proven to be highly effective with referring Occupational Therapists reporting in an independent service evaluation by Zoe Morrison, Professor of Human Resources and Organisational Behaviour at the University of Greenwich that they now consider Horticultural Therapy to be an important part of patient care. As an additional modality for treatment, mindfulness and for non-clinical (outdoor) skills development, Horticultural Therapy has now been fully integrated into the range of rehabilitation options available for DMRC Stanford Hall.

The Horticultural Therapy service at DMRC Stanford Hall is funded by a grant from the Chancellor’s LIBOR fund

During the 3 year pilot funded by The Soldiers’ Charity, the Westminster Foundation and several other generous donors, our Horticultural Therapist delivered 4,072 sessions of Horticultural Therapy to 1,316 patients and the Surgeon General, the Defence Authority for Healthcare in the Defence Medical Services Department has now recognised Horticultural Therapy “As a valuable component of the holistic package of rehab interventions which DMRC delivers to its patients.”

Following a grant from the Chancellor’s LIBOR fund and support from Help4Heroes, HighGround has successfully transitioned from Headley Court to the new DMRC and the service is now fully operational.

There are three patient groups at DMRC:

- > Complex Trauma (amputees)
- > Neuro (head injuries)
- > Force Generation (joints and spines).

Everyone who attends Horticultural Therapy must be referred by their Occupational Therapist.

Reasons for referral include:

- > Improve standing tolerance and endurance
- > Increase fine motor skills and cognitive processing
- > Improve confidence and self-esteem
- > Encourage social interaction
- > Promote transferable skills.

DMRC patients commented:

“I could use my injured hand without even knowing. It is a calm environment where not only do you feel relaxed, but good about yourself.”

“It takes your mind off the pain and there are a lot of useful and interesting things to do.”

“Nice to get out of the hospital environment into the fresh air.”

“I have vastly improved physically and emotionally. I’d overlooked my emotional needs to concentrate on the physical. Horticultural Therapy has helped me with functional skills such as bending and picking things up from different heights. You find yourself talking to other patients as a bit of self-therapy too, it’s good to offer others an ear to just listen.”

FUNDRAISING

The Charity's 2 core services are funded in different ways.

It costs £1,206 per head to deliver the 2019 Rural Weeks programme at Bicton College and £85 to deliver one session of Horticultural Therapy.

Service Leavers (those still serving in HM forces but in the transition period from military back to civilian life) now have MoD approval to use their Resettlement allowance to help us fund their Rural Week and fundraising to cover the shortfall, and the entire cost for veterans, continues apace.

We are very proud that The Royal Foundation has chosen to support Rural Weeks and continue to be very grateful to the Service benevolent funds and other generous donors who continue to support our Rural Weeks programme.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Help4Heroes to fund our transition from Headley Court to Stanford Hall. From 1st April the Horticultural Therapy service is funded with a grant from the Chancellor's LIBOR fund and we are now focused on establishing an Endowment Fund to ensure the long-term sustainability of HighGround's Horticultural Therapy Service at Stanford Hall.

All charities need to raise funding for core costs, however dull they may sound as without them, it would not be possible to deliver any services.

Our overall budget for FY2019/2020 is £342,815 of which only 16% is operational overheads.

The Friends of HighGround is in its early development stages, and we welcome any donations large or small to help us to continue our work with those who have served their Country.

You can see our current Partners and Funders here:
www.highground-uk.org/partners-and-funders

We cannot rely solely on grant-making funders to fund the Rural Weeks programmes indefinitely and must change our funding model to include corporate sponsors.

For more details please contact Anna;
anna@highground-uk.org
or 07951 495 272



“To build on the success of Step into Health, our inaugural veterans’ employment programme, working in partnership with the NHS, we explored other employment sectors where we could replicate this accomplishment. We knew that the land based sector was a popular post-service employment choice for military service leavers and veterans and from the onset of our research, it became obvious that HighGround was in a class of its own when it came to supporting the military community in this area.

The Royal Foundation and HighGround relationship developed from initially plugging some funding gaps and convening activities to supporting to an Employment Manager position. Anna, Ian and the team work incredibly hard and I envisage that having an Employment Manager in post will lessen that pressure and will be a great boost to the career prospects of those who have completed the Rural Week course.

We have been proud to work with the HighGround team and to be able to support some of the truly remarkable work that they do, and we look forward to seeing this great organisation go from strength to strength in the future.”

Karen Hodgson
Veterans Employment Manager, The Royal Foundation

GOVERNANCE

HighGround has eight Trustees; the Board is chaired by Air Commodore (Ret'd) Ian Elliott and meets quarterly.

The other Trustees are Robert Winterton, Georgina Brown, Julian Browne, Michael Ward, Jon Chandler, John Kerner and Sue Harper and Liz Brown has now joined us as Hon. Sec to the Trustees.

There is also a Development Board drawn from a wide range of experts in the land-based sector which meets regularly to advise HighGround about opportunities and developments in their individual sectors to help HighGround with its mission to deliver Life beyond the military – Outdoors.

The Development Board is chaired by Ian Elliott and Rhodri Atkins has agreed to become its first Secretary.

Anna Baker Cresswell is Executive Director and Director of Operations. She is responsible for fundraising and the day-to-day running of the Charity.

Accountants and auditors: Ryecroft Glenton
Legal advisors: Bates Wells Braithwaite LLP

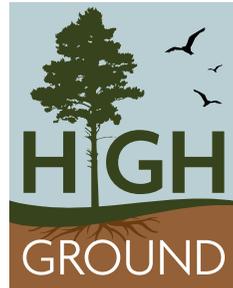
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“ We have found HighGround to be an amazing charity in so many ways. The advice on land based careers they give military leavers is wide ranging and supportive and this is demonstrated in the quality of the employees who have come to Hi-Line via the HighGround Rural Weeks programme. Having been given the opportunity to look at the different work opportunities available in the land based sector the people

who have chosen arboriculture seem to have researched our industry fully, and are 100% committed to their new careers. Military veterans bring so many transferable skills and quickly become essential members of our teams and assets to our company. HighGround make this career transition accessible to people and understand the challenges that some people may be facing.”

Kirsty McNicol.
Head of HR, Hi-Line Contractors SW Ltd.



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www.highground-uk.org

Become a Friend of HighGround and receive our free newsletter.

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