



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –
OUTDOORS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

June 2017

HighGround, 95 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2DX
Charity registered in England and Wales: 1151225. Company limited by guarantee: 823 6843.



LIFE BEYOND THE MILITARY –
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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.

VISION

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

The organisation is positioned as a forward-facing destination where beneficiaries can be assured of understanding, assistance and long-term support and advice to help sustain their successful transition to civilian life.

In particular HighGround will:

- ▶ Provide a Horticultural Therapy service at Headley Court for Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre (DMRC) patients as part of the Defence Recovery Capability and will move to the new Defence National Rehabilitation Centre at Stanford Hall in 2018 when Headley Court closes.
- ▶ 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.



TIMELINE OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

2013

MARCH

HG gets charitable status.

JULY

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

2014

FEBRUARY

Horticultural Therapy service at DMRC starts.

SEPTEMBER

Two Pilot Rural Weeks delivered at Plumpton College.

2015

FEBRUARY

Assistant to Horticultural Therapist at Headley Court appointed.

APRIL

Rural Weeks programme at Plumpton College starts.

DECEMBER

Careers Manager appointed.

2016

MARCH

Office-based support service by Careers Manager launched.

MAY

Rural Weeks programme at Plumpton College starts.

AUGUST

Land-based work experience pilot starts.

2017

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

Rural Weeks programme at Bicton College starts.

APRIL

New Chairman appointed.

MAY

Reception at Horseferry Road to welcome new Chairman and recognise all volunteers and funders.

JUNE

1st land-based sector Insight Day at Horseferry Road.

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.

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 8 Service Leavers, Reservists and Veterans to learn about what the land-based sector looks like from subject matters experts; what training and qualifications they will need and how to access them. Rural Weeks are run by our Careers Manager in conjunction with the delivering agricultural college.

Since we piloted Rural Weeks at Plumpton College in Sussex in 2014, we have delivered 13 in total. We are running our 2017 Rural Weeks programme from Bicton College in Devon.

Outcomes following a Rural Week include identifying relevant training and qualifications, starting some volunteering or work experience or in the case of those who are still serving, gaining knowledge and information to assist the decision-making process when they begin their resettlement.





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OUR REFERRAL AGENCIES INCLUDE:



STEP TOGETHER



We welcome self-referrals.

For those who don't need a Rural Week but are still looking for advice and introductions, we provide an ongoing service from our office in Westminster.

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 Dr Zoe Morrison of Aberdeen University that they now consider Horticultural Therapy to be an important part of patient care. As an additional modality for treatment, confidence builder, promotion of relaxation and mindfulness and for non-clinical (outdoor) skills development, Horticultural Therapy has now been fully integrated into the range of rehabilitation options available for Headley Court's patients.

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."

It will cost £354,000 to run the service for the next 3 years. HighGround currently receives no statutory funding and has launched a fundraising campaign the Horticultural Therapy Challenge to keep the service going.

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.

Reason for Referrals include:

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

Dr Sue Stuart-Smith, Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist says:

"The garden at Headley Court, which I have visited, provides a valuable resource as a peaceful space that is distinct from the hospital environment. It also gives the servicemen and women something positive in the form of gardening skills which they can take home afterwards and this can help with the process of reconnecting with families through gardening at home. Gardening is an inclusive activity and combats isolation through feelings of connecting to nature as well as sharing with others the pleasure in the produce and the beauty of the garden."

Headley Court patients commented:

"Horticultural Therapy has helped my standing tolerance and walking on different surfaces, giving time away from a clinical environment. Therapy by stealth – you enjoy it so much you don't notice the pain."

"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."





FUNDING

The 2017 Rural Weeks programme at Bicton College will cost £98,816 to deliver and we gratefully acknowledge Help4Heroes, Greenwich Hospital, the Royal Marines Charity, RAF Benevolent Fund and the Officers' Association whose generosity allows us to deliver this unique programme for Service Leavers and Veterans.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Annington which has enabled us to locate the Charity in Westminster until Spring 2018, and our core costs in 2017 are £38,300.

We now face the challenge of having to fund the Horticultural Therapy service for a further 3 years in order to continue providing the service when Headley Court moves to the late Duke of Westminster's magnificent new facility the Defence National Rehabilitation Centre in autumn 2018.

We have launched the Horticultural Therapy Challenge to raise the £354,000 this will cost.

For more details about how you can help us please contact Anna. anna@highground-uk.org.

GOVERNANCE

HighGround has 5 Trustees; the Board is chaired by Air Commodore (Ret'd) Ian Elliott and meets quarterly.

The other Trustees are Tim Eastwood, Tony Groom, Georgina Brown and Anna Baker Cresswell.

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.

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

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