

OA

OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION



Life beyond the Services



Impact Report 2015

OA

Introduction to the OA



Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty



Field Marshal Earl Haig



**Marshal of the Royal Air Force
Viscount Trenchard**

The Officers' Association's work is wide ranging. This report explains the work it has been doing during the past year and the impact it has had on many former officers' lives.

On demobilisation after the First World War, hundreds of former officers, some still suffering from their wounds, found themselves in desperate circumstances, often with no job, money or home. Officers

were not eligible for payments made to other servicemen; consequently, a great many of those who served during the war were without any source of income on returning to civilian life. Determined that something should be done for these men who had sacrificed so much for their country, Earl and Countess Haig supported by Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty and Marshal of the Royal Air Force Viscount Trenchard, along with the City of London, organised a highly successful public subscription.

The result was the Officers' Association (OA), which received its Royal Charter in 1921, the year after it was founded.

Almost a hundred years on, the OA continues to support former officers and their dependants in a variety of ways, giving advice on benefits and sources of assistance, helping them manage their finances and providing financial support to those in need. In addition, the OA offers extensive careers services to officers in transition from the Services, with the aim of achieving sustainable employment.



Admiral Sir George Zambellas
First Sea Lord and Chief of
Naval Staff

“The Officers’ Association provides professional guidance to officers and their spouses during the transition from a Service to a civilian career, and provides advice and, where needed, financial help to retired officers and their dependants in difficulty. For the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, this invaluable work provides a level of reassurance to both serving and retired officers and their families, for which I am thankful.”



General Sir Nick Carter
Chief of the General Staff

“Commitment to our comrades is one of the distinguishing characteristics of military service, and one that does not end when one leaves the Army. The Officers’ Association plays a huge role in supporting our officers and their families as they leave the Service and thereafter; its advice and assistance enhance lives, particularly for those in time of need. I am very grateful for all that the Association has done and continues to do for those who have left our Service.”



**Air Chief Marshal
Sir Andrew Pulford**
Chief of the Air Staff

“The Officers’ Association works to support officers and their families as they move from Service to civilian life and helps to ease what can be a worrying time. This support endures through an officer’s life, working alongside the Single Service charities to ensure that those in difficulty, whether financial or otherwise, receive the help they need. I am most grateful to the Officers’ Association for all that they do.”

What we do

Benevolence

The Benevolence Department's primary purpose is to give advice and/or financial support to former officers and their dependants. This is done by making grants for the benefit of individuals falling into two main areas: regular allowances predominantly for elderly beneficiaries on low incomes, and one-off grants towards specific items such as disability equipment. The department provides a holistic service for its beneficiaries using 'The Independence Star™', a bespoke tool that assesses the beneficiary's needs in the areas of finances, housing, health, activities, social life and well-being.

- Advice on Statutory Benefits
 - Adult Social Care
 - Debt management information
 - Annual allowances
 - One-off payments for specific household or disability items
 - Grants towards Domiciliary Care
 - Care Home top-up fees
-

"Thank you so much for your help in securing this wonderful wheelchair. It arrived today and I am keeping my fingers crossed that my mother adapts from a life within the four walls of her room to a more sociable world outside. She is excited and full of smiles."

Beneficiary



Employment

The Employment Department's primary purpose is to enable former officers and their dependants to gain sustainable and fulfilling employment. It offers professional, impartial and practical advice on all aspects of transition to civilian life and employment. To support officers to achieve their goals it can help them to build knowledge (OA Insight), grow connections (OA Connect) and work with employers and organisations to bring jobs and other opportunities (OA Appointments). In addition the OA works closely with the Career Transition Partnership in assisting Service Leavers find a job.

- Workshops and webinars
 - Symposia
 - Professional development programme
 - Online knowledge base
 - Networking events
 - Access to professional network of former officers
 - 1:1 employment consultations
 - Executive jobs board
 - Employer support to attract, recruit, retain and develop former officers.
-

"I enjoyed sharing my own experiences of leaving the Service to the benefit of those still serving, and, as an employer, was encouraged by the calibre of talent available."

Employer event feedback



How we have helped

Benevolence



459 allowances awarded to individuals on low incomes



361 one-off grants to beneficiaries for the purchase of items such as mobility/disability equipment, home repair and maintenance and to meet bills; provided **47** beneficiaries with Care Home 'top up' fees



11 payments given to beneficiaries to allow them to be cared for in their own home



926 people advised about benefits, maximising income, reducing costs and managing debt



159 beneficiaries in 30 different countries in 2015

"It felt like more than just money; it warmed my heart to feel that we were still cared about , even though my husband has been out of the Royal Navy for over 13 years."

Beneficiary

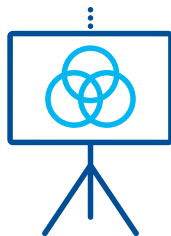
"You've been helping us a long, long time and I cannot find words to express my heartfelt acknowledgment of your goodness towards us."

Beneficiary

Employment



7000 job seekers accessed OA Insight webinars



400 attendees at workshops and symposiums



Networking events in **Winchester, Tidworth, Portsmouth, Catterick and Bristol**



Over **400** job seekers, network contact volunteers and employers at regional networking events



800 officer friendly roles advertised on Executive jobs board;



Over **1500** users accessed the jobs board each month



Job seeker engagement: **736** career consultations conducted in 2014-15



2500 regular opens of OA Jobs newsletter

"The combination of knowledge and network which the OA provides access to gives us all a phenomenal advantage in the hunt for jobs."

Job seeker



Making an impact

Benevolence

Among those the OA has assisted is the 89 year old former Army officer Christopher Holmes* and father of Mrs Corner.

"I want to thank you on behalf of my father and family. We are delighted with the award from the OA, the Regiment and ABF The Soldiers' Charity. Managing my father's affairs and his wellbeing is hard as we see him struggle with Alzheimer's. He is physically healthy and has great memories of his 58 years with Mum. We believe he is best off at home and it is heart warming to ring and hear him laugh with his carer. And he can get out and about locally. Without the support we could not have coped."

Beneficiary



The OA has also helped the widow of RAF officer Tony Gray.

"Following the death of my husband and a spell of sickness when I lost my job, I must thank you for helping me with an annual allowance. When you told me that the RAFBF was also helping with a one-off grant, I couldn't believe it. Not only am I better off

financially, but my distress and worry about my situation have also gone. I cannot thank you enough and the Honorary Representative who was so understanding about my situation."

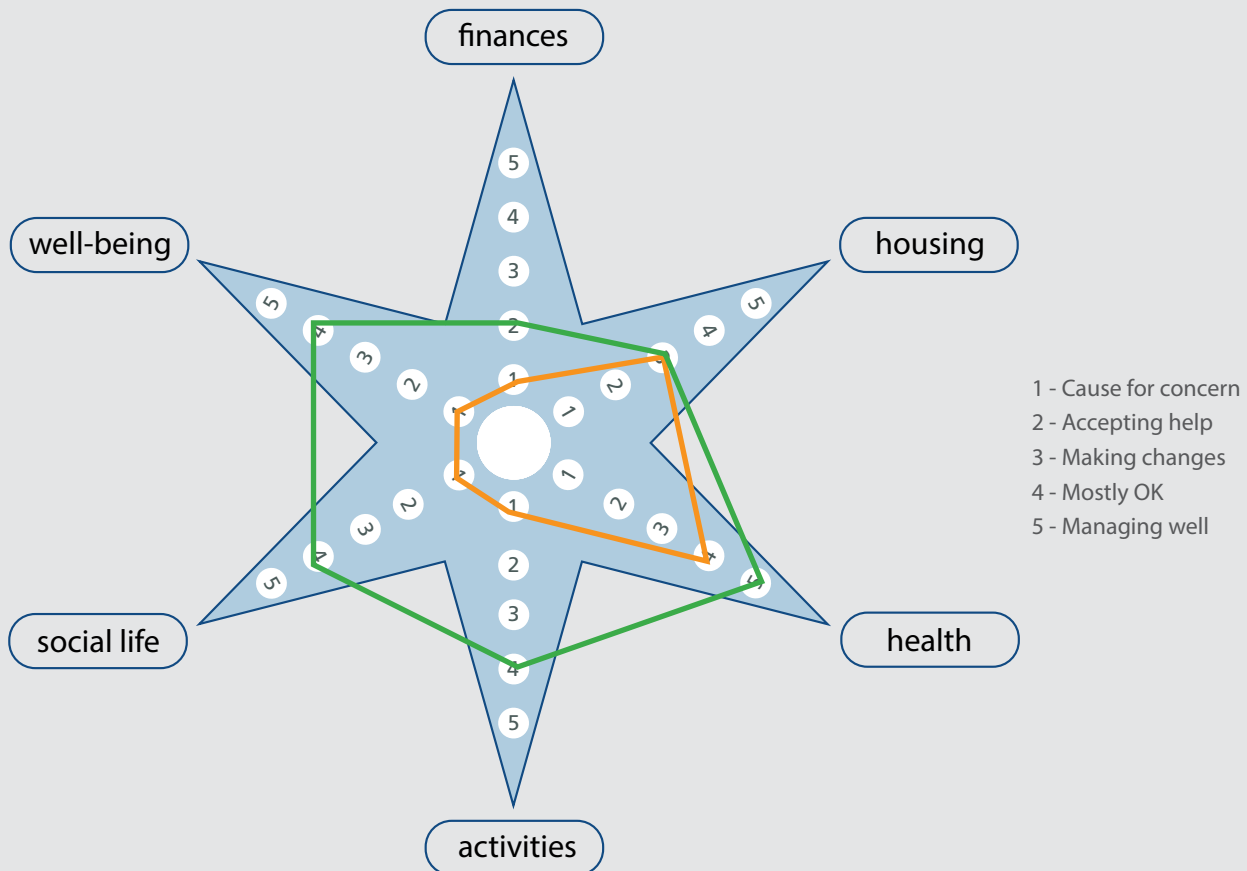
Beneficiary

*Beneficiaries' names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

The Independence Star™

Our new analysis and reporting system takes a holistic approach to a beneficiary's needs. It gives a structure for our Hon Reps to work with, which in turn enables an applicant to describe their needs and to prioritise the areas where they require assistance to make changes in their lives. This new system also gives consistent and high quality information which enables the Benevolence team to focus on the help required. The additional benefits are an ability to evaluate our performance, plan new services to benefit our community, and measure the impact of our work.

- Hands responsibility to applicant whilst structuring conversation
- Greater engagement from applicant
- Hon Reps apply holistic approach
- Makes progress visible and identifies next steps



Independence Star™ example

- Year 1 ——— (orange line)
- Year 2 ——— (green line)

Making an impact

Employment



“Thoroughly worthwhile and a valuable opportunity to extend my network with both potential employers and fellow Service leavers. Thank you for the continued support.”

Job seeker



“As my first experience in transition from military service to a civilian career, I found the event to be excellent. Relaxed, yet with a clear purpose which seamlessly threaded throughout the event, I felt at ease and able to approach anyone for information and advice throughout.”

Job seeker



OA
INSIGHT Giving Knowledge

**Case Study: Project Management Workshop,
Leeds September 2015**

A pilot workshop aimed at supporting Service leavers preparing for careers in project management was attended by 19 job seekers and 3 employers who were actively seeking candidates. The day consisted of interactive sessions covering training opportunities, sector briefings from former officers established in civilian project management roles, and a CV masterclass specifically targeted at project management opportunities.

Impact: Of those attending 100% surveyed found that workshop satisfied their needs; 3 officers directly attributed the workshop to securing employment in project management; all three employers who participated subsequently started programmes to support service leavers following the workshop.

OA
CONNECT Increasing Your Network

Expansion of OA sponsored networking events across regional centres has allowed a greater number of serving and former officers and employers to access networking opportunities in 2015. In addition, a number of local groups run by volunteers in Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle and Bristol have been growing steadily with marketing support from the OA.

Impact: The impact of networking in researching sectors, roles and making connections to access the hidden jobs market is well recognised by job seekers as being a key element of their transition campaign. Networking events have also provided opportunities for employers who are actively looking for candidates to engage with job seekers and have resulted in roles being secured by Service leavers.

OA
APPOINTMENTS Bringing You Jobs

Case Study: Nationwide Recruitment Programme

In May 2015 the Business Transformation Division of Nationwide approached the OA seeking support in the recruitment of project managers and development of a sustainable recruitment programme. Having understood the values, skills and talent of former officers, Nationwide were keen to bring further military talent into the organisation and offer second careers to Service Leavers.

Impact: The OA assisted in awareness raising of the opportunities, promoting Nationwide's insight evening and subsequent recruitment pipeline through extensive marketing to officers. The insight day attracted over 100 attendees (of which 60 were directly attributed to the OA); this translated into 65 high calibre applicants for the vacancies available; of which 8 were subsequently offered roles and started in September 2015. Following the success of this recruitment programme, further cycles are envisaged for 2016. With the assistance of Nationwide the OA then went on to produce a case study of the programme which has been used as an exemplar of best practice to share with other employers.



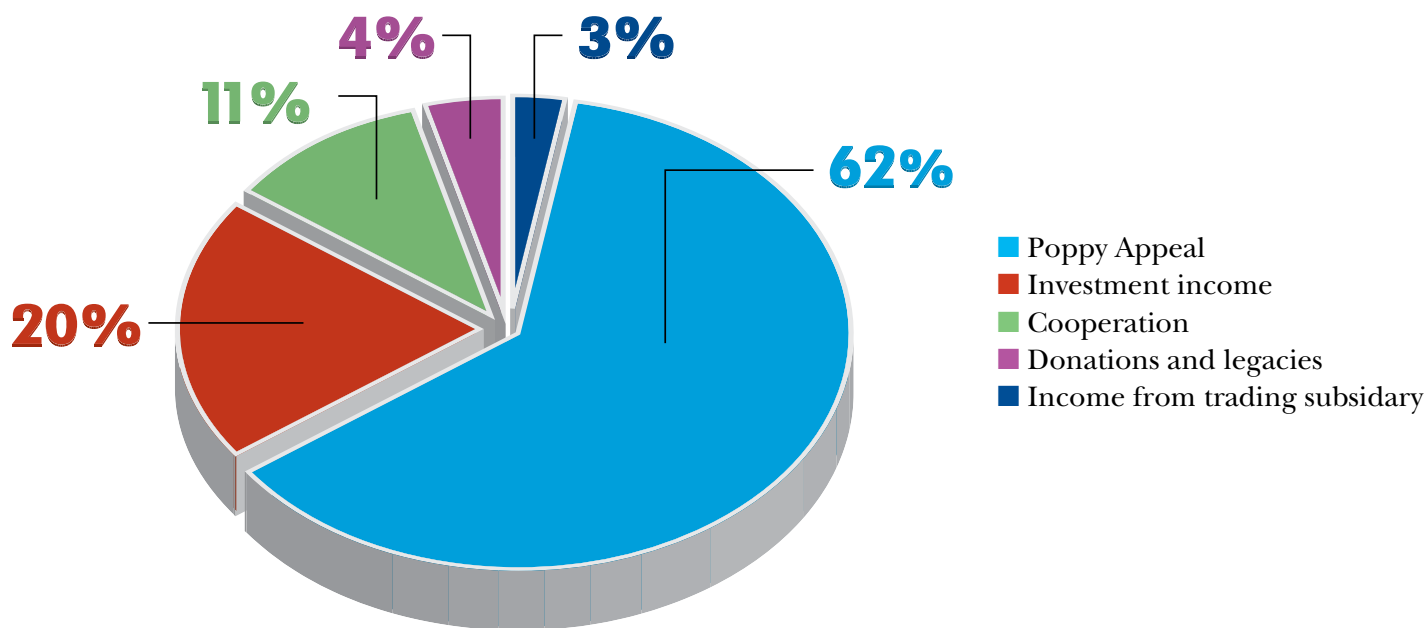
Our financial year

Overall income

Thanks to The Royal British Legion, military charities, companies, families and friends and to those who remember our charity in their wills.

At 30th September 2015 our free unrestricted funds were £13.388M providing a strong level of reserves to move the charity forward. The Board of trustees have made the strategic decision to draw down these reserves; the charity ended the year with a planned deficit of £151K.

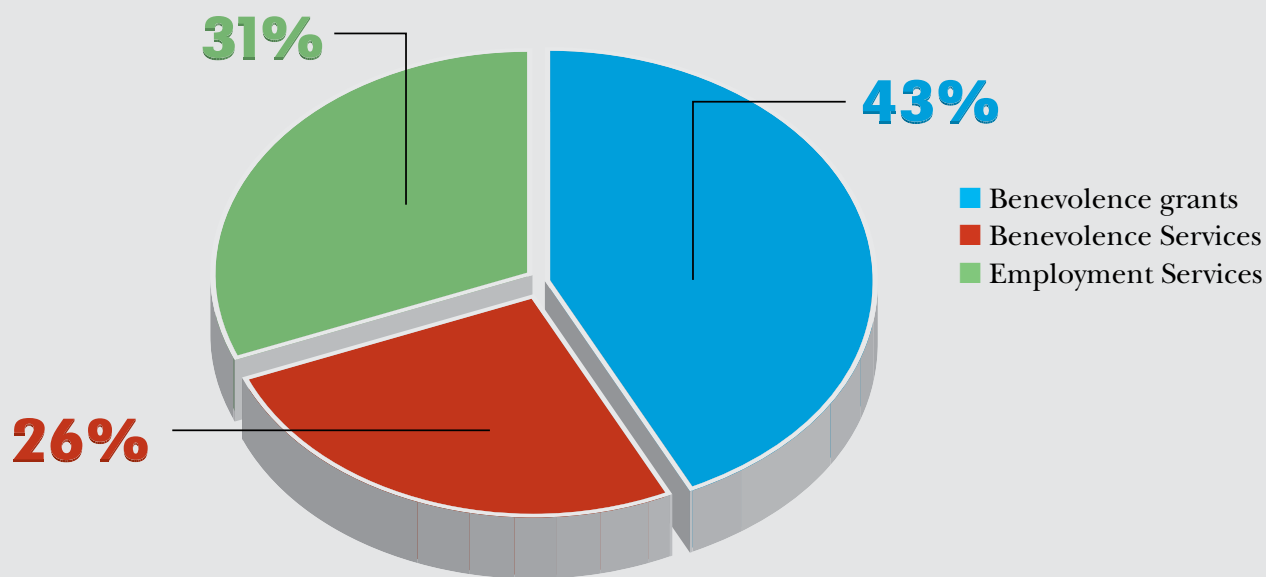
Income from The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal street collection totalled £2.1M. In addition £456K was received as restricted funding from other charities mostly in the form of direct grant payments to beneficiaries or as a contribution towards the OA grants awarded. A further £656K was received from investment income and £46K as unrestricted funds from legacies and donations.



Overall income for 2014-15: £3.326M

Overall expenditure

Of the money spent on charitable activities 43% was in respect of Benevolence grants paid out to those in need. A further 26% was spent on facilitating these grants and providing welfare advice and guidance to the wider former officer community. Employment Services accounted for 31% of spending which included providing career consultations to officers leaving the Armed Services and for running networking and other jobseeker-focused events to help those transitioning to civilian life.



Money spent on charitable activities

Collaborative working

The Officers' Association is strongly committed to working with Service and civilian charities, as well as other organisations and employers, in the best interests of their beneficiaries, and the Armed Forces and veteran community as a whole.



The OA has a particularly strong relationship with The Royal British Legion (TRBL). TRBL continues to be the major source of funding to the OA donating 7.5% of the Annual Poppy Appeal street collection to support its work. This equated to xx% of the OA's total income for the year.

Chris Simpkins, Director General of The Royal British Legion says of the relationship:

“We have a unique relationship with the Officers’ Association. Since the Legion’s formation in 1921, we have worked closely with the Association in delivering our joint goal of supporting ex-Armed Forces personnel. In my time with TRBL, I have seen the OA continue to develop its work and adapt to a changing environment and changing beneficiary needs as they transition to civilian life.”



Successes in 2015 and future plans

Benevolence

- The Independence Star™ was developed and introduced as an impact tool
- Improvement of the Benevolence area of the OA website
- Creation of an Honorary Representative Support Manager position
- Research results allowed services offered to be improved
- Increased marketing of services

Employment

- The Bristol office was launched
- Consolidation of services from Leeds, Portsmouth and London
- Further expansion of services on offer to job seekers and their spouses
- Increased business development activities
- Greater engagement with employers

Plans for 2016

The main focus for the Benevolence department is to develop a telephone befriending service for those beneficiaries who are lonely and have little contact with other people. The OA is constantly looking at how it can improve and extend the services it offers and a telephone befriending and a pen pal service are just two of the things on the radar for the future.

Plans for 2016

The Employment Department is looking to grow the online community of serving and former officers and improve engagement between these groups and employers therefore increasing the number of job seekers and former officers accessing the department's services. In 2016 the department plans to develop and implement a strategy to support the officers' spouses. There is also scope to explore options for working more closely with the CTP and delivering services as part of the wider CTP contract.

Making a positive difference

OA would like to thank personal donors, charities and companies who continue to support its work in the UK and around the world.

Get in touch

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