

What does *Help for Heroes* do?

By Simone Ward

The Charity was set up in 2007, when young men and women were returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with horrific injuries. Bryn Parry CBE, Emma Parry OBE, and a small group of people set up the Charity to give veterans and their families the support they need and deserve.

Our support now goes beyond service men and women who have been injured in conflict. We support veterans and their families from any branch of the UK military, regulars and reserves, irrespective of length or place of service, and locally embedded civilians who worked under the command of UK Armed Forces. Our aim is to provide life-changing support to veterans and their families for as long as it takes.

The Charity supports veterans and their families from any branch of the UK military, regulars and reserves, irrespective of length or place of service, and locally embedded civilians who worked under the command of UK Armed Forces. In financial year 2024-25 the Charity supported 5,229 veterans and family members – more than ever before in a 12-month period and a 31 percent increase on the year before across the board – clinical, psychological and welfare needs.

It's estimated that more than 6,100 veterans live in the Broadland area.

My role is to work as a community builder alongside veterans and their families, using the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. What this means is that instead of focusing on what people lack, we start with what they already possess: their skills, experiences, relationships, and the inherent strengths within the community itself.

We also work closely with families, as they are a crucial part of the community. When people feel connected and valued, real and lasting change occurs – not because services have stepped in, but because communities themselves are stronger.

Veterans bring tremendous value to civilian life through their resilience, leadership, problem-solving skills, and strong sense of teamwork. My role involves helping to reconnect these strengths to the community. Instead of doing things for people, we focus on working *with* them.

This might include connecting veterans with one another, supporting them in leading community activities, or helping them rediscover their own skills and how those can benefit others. It's about shifting the narrative from viewing veterans as individuals in need of support to recognising them as active contributors and leaders within their communities.

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The key message I want readers to take away is this: every community already has what it needs to thrive. Sometimes, it just takes a bit of support to bring those strengths together and make them visible.

Coltishall drop-in Cafe: see information below:

No need to sign up for anything, just turn up. We'll be inviting along different agencies that can share advice on different topics.

The next session is on Thursday 4th June.

You can find out more information by looking on our Facebook page - search for Help for Heroes Norwich. Or email me at Simone.Ward@helpforheroes.org.uk



MEET SIMONE YOUR COMMUNITY BUILDER FOR NORWICH

Working with all ex-service personnel and their families, no need to book. Come and see what's on!

**Every First Thursday 10–1 Coltishall Village Hall NR12 7HL
Contact: 01206 814882**

**HELP for
HEROES**



Help for Heroes is a charity registered in England and Wales (1120920) and Scotland (SC044884).