The Poppy Factory Building for the Future

Message from our Chairman

MARK PEROWNE
CHAIRMAN

The Poppy Factory has experienced yet another successful year, growing the number of disabled ex-Service men and women supported back into work. We are also very proud to announce that we surpassed the 500 milestone in the year, a target that we set ourselves 5 years ago. I congratulate all those in the organisation who have worked tirelessly towards this extraordinary achievement. We could not have done this without becoming more financially efficient and without the overwhelming generosity shown by our supporters, especially when they learn about the real impact of our work within veterans’ communities and for families across England and Wales.

With an increasing number of veterans reaching out for help and advice, our priority for the future is to grow our employability model so that we can support hundreds more disabled ex-Service personnel into meaningful careers over the coming years. To this end, the Board of Trustees has agreed to continue to invest existing resources into the Executive Team’s exciting plans for the future.

We want to stay at the forefront of current best practice whilst building a sustainable service, continuing to research and innovate in the area of disability employment to give the best possible support to our veteran ‘clients’ and the Armed Forces community. An ambitious new 5-year plan will be developed and implemented during the coming year and we will equip our people so they are able to fulfil those ambitions.

We will continue to increase our efforts to raise the vital funds that The Poppy Factory needs to continue its life-changing work in the longer term. The future of our veterans depends on the ongoing generosity of our supporters!

Once again, I would like to thank everyone involved in The Poppy Factory’s work. I hope you will continue to support the charity in the coming years and help markedly improve the lives of disabled ex-Service people and their families.
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Melanie Waters
CEO The Poppy Factory

The Poppy Factory is an historic charity with modern aspirations. When we started our Getting You Back to Work programme in 2010, we wanted to be ambitious and to use our resources to help as many disabled veterans into sustainable careers as possible. There is an evidenced link between work and the wellbeing of a sick or disabled person, and work can lead to better health outcomes (Department for Work and Pensions report, 2006).

Most ex-Service people transition into civilian life well, but complex health conditions can make it really tough for some individuals to find and maintain civilian employment. These are the people we are here to help and their employment challenges can be varied; around 62% of The Poppy Factory veterans from 2015 experienced a mental health condition and 58% reported physical health challenges such as visual impairments and musculoskeletal problems. Many of our ‘clients’ had a combination of both mental and physical health challenges.

There were challenges in gauging the requirement for personalised employment support amongst the disabled ex-Forces community. Yet our performance over the past 5 years has demonstrated that the demand most definitely exists: we surpassed our original target to help over 500 individuals into work and the number of veterans we support has risen by an average of 69% each year over this period.

It is now time to look to the future.

We estimate that there are over 17,000 unemployed, disabled ex-Service men and women out there who may require The Poppy Factory’s help.

We are growing our Employability and Supporting teams, and developing the skills of our people to ensure we continuously improve our expertise in the field. Many members of the team are studying for their Career Guidance and Development Level 6 Diplomas and we have recruited our first dedicated Employability Consultants (ECs) for Wales.

“It is now time to look to the future.”

We are working collaboratively with more businesses, funders and charities than ever before in order to secure income, support networks
and also vocational opportunities for our veterans. We have initiated the development of a strategic group involving 15 key charities with the aim of working together to optimise vocational opportunities for ex-Service individuals. We also continue to play a major role supporting the Service charity employment consortium, SORTED!, and the Confederation of Service Charities, Cobseo. The Poppy Factory’s Business Development team works alongside over 250 employers, such as National Express and Transport for London, to organise vocational days and source hundreds of opportunities for our veterans.

We have commissioned research and created digital tools, such as our online jobs portal, to reach and engage more veterans. Through digital advertising campaigns and improved relationships with referral organisations like Combat Stress and Blind Veterans UK, we have seen monthly registrations for the Getting You Back to Work programme double in the last year.

The Richmond factory is also home to our Production team, who handcrafted a record number of Remembrance wreaths and symbols this year, and our Fundraising team, who contributed nearly £900,000 towards the cost of Getting You Back to Work. We strive to set an example in Richmond to both employers and high-profile visitors alike on supporting disabled people in the workplace.

It has been an exciting year for The Poppy Factory, but we now need to look at building towards a future where every disabled veteran has the opportunity for meaningful work.
Joe’s story

JOE
EX-ARMY

Employed with help from
The Poppy Factory

Joe enjoyed a long career with the Royal Engineers before an old motorbiking injury began to deteriorate during an arduous Iraq tour.

Joe required surgery, and he left the Forces in 2012 facing unemployment for the first time in decades.

He discovered The Poppy Factory at an employment fair and an Employability Consultant was soon helping Joe with CV assistance and interview coaching.

Joe is now working as an electrical engineer in Kent.

“After interview knockbacks, The Poppy Factory gave me feedback and reassurance. They never turned me away.”
Gary’s story

GARY
EX-NAVY

Employed with help from The Poppy Factory

Gary was suffering from depression, anxiety and insomnia after being medically discharged from the Royal Navy.

“I had major social issues; I was living on my own and couldn’t leave the house. I knew I could achieve but I was stuck at the bottom.”

The Poppy Factory supported Gary into a role as Quality Officer for Transport for London, one of the many employers that works with The Poppy Factory to employ veterans with health challenges.

“There is so much to learn and I want to be brilliant at what I do.”
A day in the life of an Employability Consultant

ADAM GREEN
LEAD EMPLOYABILITY CONSULTANT (EC) FOR THE NORTH WEST

My morning starts with emails as I often receive new referrals and urgent messages from veterans overnight. I like to arrange meeting new veterans as soon as possible as receiving support quickly can make a big difference in some cases.

It is at these initial meetings that I learn about the individual’s transferable skills, experience, career aspirations and any health conditions that need to be taken into account. Registered veterans have a Vocational Profiling phone call before they are transferred to me, so I have a good idea of what resources are appropriate to take to the first meeting.

Working alongside the veterans (‘clients’), we try to match their skills with potential careers. If there are gaps, then training and volunteer opportunities exist as a means to improve their employability. Sometimes there is funding available from other charities and organisations for these courses too and, if appropriate, I will work with the client to complete an appropriate grant application form.

We also work together on the client’s CV. Although I give direction and advice, I do try to get the individual to do as much of the work themselves as this is about using motivational techniques to encourage them to take ownership of their path to employment. I occasionally have to manage clients’ expectations.
as ex-Forces people can sometimes understandably be out of touch with the civilian jobs market.

Veterans can find and apply for opportunities through our online jobs portal, which provides a platform for their EC to monitor and support the client through the application process. If one of my clients is looking for specific work then I use my local contacts and The Poppy Factory’s dedicated Business Development team to source opportunities for them.

I am on hand to give interview coaching if a client needs it and, for successful applications, I work alongside both the employer and the client to identify any workplace adjustments they might need, providing an extra layer of support and advice to the veteran.

I can spend a lot of time travelling, supporting veterans from all across Cumbria, Lancashire and Cheshire, from Stoke-on-Trent all the way up to Carlisle. The rest of the regional Getting You Back to Work team are very supportive and we are able to share the workload if necessary (and our experiences) to ensure the best possible outcomes for each veteran.

I often attend employment fairs and veterans’ coffee mornings as these are great places to advertise our services to potential clients, to meet employers, and to build relationships with referral organisations.

I also check in with some of my clients who are now in employment, as part of our ongoing support. The majority require little more than a confidence boost, although sometimes people with mental or physical health conditions can go through rough patches and require further adjustments to their working environment. In which case, I work with the employer and the veteran to agree any changes or support that could help. Usually a small adjustment is all that is needed.

Every day is different for an EC, although they nearly all finish with a few hours of admin and research. At the end of each one I always feel like I have made a real difference to someone’s chances of gaining or keeping a rewarding job.
Who we helped in 2015

Total veterans supported:

- 2009/2010: TOT. 35
- 2010/2011: TOT. 58
- 2011/2012: TOT. 143
- 2012/2013: TOT. 239
- 2013/2014: TOT. 245
- 2014/2015: TOT. 392

- 30 veterans given employment support
- 30 new veterans into work during the year

The service delivered 124 positive outcomes:
Monthly registrations have doubled since 2014

We have developed strong relationships with referral organisations to ensure that knowledge of our service reaches as many veterans in need as possible.

Where we helped in 2015
Wayne’s story

WAYNE
EX-ARMY

Employed with help from
The Poppy Factory

Following in his father’s footsteps, Wayne always knew he wanted to be in the military. He enlisted when he was 16 and led a successful 25-year career until he was seriously injured in a tank accident and had to undergo a below-knee amputation.

The transition into civilian life really knocked Wayne’s confidence. After leaving the Forces in 2011, Wayne was struggling to find employment before a friend recommended The Poppy Factory; “I was really struggling. It was very, very hard to ask for help. My friend told me that I needed to make this call.”

The charity rallied around Wayne immediately, and worked alongside his ambitions to find him meaningful work; “I explained that whilst serving, I went on various battlefield tours and very much admired what the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) did.”

Within two weeks, Wayne’s Poppy Factory EC helped create a CV and coach him for an interview for a job within the CWGC. Despite the lack of horticultural experience, the interviewer recognised Wayne’s passion and agreed to mentor him - with support from The Poppy Factory - for an initial 12 months.

After spending the first half of his working life in the military, Wayne is now determined to spend the second half at the CWGC. With The Poppy Factory’s help, Wayne has passed his RHS qualifications and now has aspirations to become the Head Gardener at the CWGC.

“For that difficult call in 2011 to where I am today and what I have achieved, The Poppy Factory’s guidance, trust and faith in me has been unbelievable.”
“I absolutely love going to work every day.”
An exemplary employer in Richmond

Over the next few years, we want to develop our growing specialist experience as an employer of people with disabilities and to transform our headquarters into an exciting Richmond destination.

We are aiming to build a working environment in Richmond that is universally inclusive for our people. We want to set an example by helping businesses learn about the best way to support people with health conditions in the workplace. Our factory will become a space that inspires decision-makers to champion veteran employability.

The Poppy Factory is iconic, and we want to further establish it as a local treasure of which the people of Richmond are proud. Creating a destination for visitors to Richmond will require the continued support of the Richmond community. Factory visitors should leave the building as supporters, having learnt all about our rich heritage and the impact of the work we do today.

Major George Howson, our inspirational founder, would be proud to learn that we are taking his ideas to the next stage; becoming the experts in our field and creating a platform on which to educate the wider community for the benefit of all wounded, injured and sick veterans.

Over the last year we have built up our community profile and The Poppy Factory is becoming a regular presence at local events. Our Waterloo themed concert at Richmond’s St Mary Magdalene church in June was a resounding success, and many thanks to everyone who took part. We are organising another concert for 2016 and running even more events with our local partners to raise awareness of The Poppy Factory.

Thanks also goes out to the hundreds of groups that visited The Poppy Factory in 2015 to help spread our message. We are also proud to welcome groups of VIPs and key decision-makers, and last year we hosted a number of interested MPs and also a group of cross bench peers from the House of Lords.
A record **10,404 visitors** came to Richmond to hear our story in 2015.

Visitors spent **£24,158** in the gift shop last year!
What did we make in 2015?

11.4 million poppies

135,000 wreaths

1.1 million remembrance symbols

A new royal wreath for HRH Prince Harry
Listening to our people

2015 saw The Poppy Factory commission its first staff survey. The results were great and they speak for themselves:

- 87% staff are proud to say they work for The Poppy Factory
- 85% staff feel they have the tools to do their job
- 86% staff understand how their role contributes to The Poppy Factory’s achievements
- 75% staff feel they have the opportunity to contribute to decisions in their team
- 80% staff feel valued for the work they do
- 86% staff feel The Poppy Factory is flexible with respect to family responsibilities

The survey identified some areas of improvement too and our aim is to repeat the survey annually to help us monitor these improvements.

We were also able to use the survey to derive a set of values for The Poppy Factory: pride, flexibility, a sense of purpose, valuing people, and inclusivity. These will be our guiding principles for the future.
Chelsea Pensioners and cadets take a break from our Waterloo concert in June.
The Web Ellis Trophy visited The Poppy Factory in the lead up to the 2015 Rugby World Cup.
First class production

2015 was another record year of factory production. The factory team, along with a network of home workers, produced 11.4 million poppies, a record 135,000 wreaths and sprays, and 1.1 million remembrance symbols – the latter was an increase of 81% on 2014.

We are incredibly proud of this achievement and the record order from The Royal British Legion clearly shows renewed public interest in the Armed Forces. The Poppy Factory is one of many charities working hard to improve public perceptions. Hundreds of businesses (including ourselves) have already signed up to the Government’s Armed Forces Covenant – promising to treat those who have served in HM Armed Forces without disadvantage.

Working collaboratively with others is important to us, and many of our people volunteer to help other military charities. We also donate the proceeds of our annual Field of Remembrance to The Royal British Legion and, in 2014, our team raised £31,000 at Westminster Abbey in November 2014. It was a privilege to host HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, and HRH Prince Henry of Wales (Harry) as they led the Remembrance Service and met with The Poppy Factory people (pictured).

Volunteer breaks record

One of our corporate volunteers, Lydia Nobrega of J P Morgan, smashed our all-time poppy-making record by hammering out 1,493 poppies in her allocated 110 minutes back in September!

Corporate groups often visit us for team building days and this record had stood for several years. Congratulations Lydia!
The Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Harry meet The Poppy Factory staff at the 2015 Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey
Paul’s story

PAUL
EX-ARMY

Employed with help from The Poppy Factory

Paul was in denial about having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after leaving the Forces until he was officially diagnosed.

“I felt ashamed until I got my head around it…you are supposed to be a strong soldier and nothing could bother you, but a mental illness felt like an invisible injury.”

Shortly after diagnosis, Paul faced a prison sentence. In part, he describes his actions as an outcome from an ongoing need to seek adrenaline. He decided to make the best of his situation and enrolled on numerous courses whilst in prison.

Following his release, Paul discovered Inside Right, a programme run by Everton in the Community to provide opportunities for ex-Service people to meet regularly. While attending weekly football training sessions, he became familiar with the team behind the programme. He started volunteering and joined the Safe Hands project, helping integrate young offenders back into society after leaving secure care. Given his personal experience he quickly became a valued team-member.

Paul then met with a local Poppy Factory Employability Consultant (EC) at a monthly coffee morning, run as part of Inside Right. He was keen to work full-time with Safe Hands, but both Everton in the Community and Paul needed additional support to make it work.

Following support from his EC, Paul was taken on as a full-time Support Worker in 2013.

“I have had various jobs since leaving the Forces but this is the first job I have had where I have felt happy. I get out of bed with a spring in my step. I am doing something useful, changing people’s lives, and it is the experiences I have been exposed to which make me a valued member in the team.”
“I have had various jobs since leaving the Forces but this is the first where I am doing something useful and changing people’s lives.”
We attend and hold many exciting events throughout the year to increase awareness of, and raise essential funding for, our work.

Last year was a busy year for our events team; not only did we attend many local fairs and employment shows around the country, we also organised several successful Poppy Factory events. Our Team Poppy Factory accomplished great feats on land, on the water, and in the skies.

In Richmond, our fantastic Waterloo concert at St Mary Magdalene church was attended by 150 people, and our Open Garden event at Trumpeters’ House was enjoyed by 400 visitors, significantly raising our profile within the community.

21 supporters ran a combined 200 miles between them at the Richmond Running Festival and others jumped out of aeroplanes with the Red Devils. Some even took on an epic 125-mile canoe race to raise money for The Poppy Factory.

We also kicked off the #500Challenge at the end of 2015, encouraging supporters to take on ‘500’-themed challenges to celebrate helping 500 disabled veterans back into work.

Throughout the year, our events generated £59,000 in voluntary income, and we are incredibly grateful for the support of all those involved.
Physical and mental health issues can add to the range of challenges that Armed Forces veterans face when trying to gain civilian employment. Financial instability can put strain on families and sometimes leads to family break up and potentially homelessness.

We believe that sustainable and rewarding employment can give disabled veterans a chance to regain their independence.

The generosity of our funders and individual donors contributed nearly £900,000 in 2015, enabling The Poppy Factory to support 392 disabled individuals throughout the year. Our property in Richmond also provides us with supplementary income through residential and office rental. This means we can invest our fundraising proceeds directly into helping our veteran ‘clients’. It is estimated that there are still thousands of ex-Service men and women with health barriers who need help seeking employment across England and Wales. In order to support them, we would like to develop the skills of our people so that we can make a positive difference supporting our clients.

We are setting up a platform for sustainable fundraising and we are very grateful to all the organisations and individuals who have already subscribed to our vision of a future where every disabled veteran has the opportunity for meaningful work.
We fulfil an order from The Royal British Legion to make poppies and wreaths for the annual Poppy Appeal.

Although we make no profit, the annual order for poppies means we are able to employ disabled veterans and their dependants at our factory in Richmond.
Funding streams

- Military charities 47%
- Legacies 17%
- Trusts & Foundations 22%
- Events 7%
- Corporate 2%
- Individual giving 4%
- Major donors 1%
- Individual giving 4%
# Financial information summary

## Analysis of expenditure 2015 Total £ 2014 Total £

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<th>Category</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<td>Appeal order</td>
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<td>1,767,156</td>
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<td>Estate: investment property</td>
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<td>Estate: office rental</td>
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<td>Estate: beneficiary flats</td>
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<td>Fundraising costs</td>
<td>190,592</td>
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<td>Shop sales</td>
<td>13,899</td>
<td>11,023</td>
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<td>Getting You Back to Work</td>
<td>1,135,513</td>
<td>1,122,972</td>
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<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,610,586</strong></td>
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## Analysis of income streams 2015 Total £ 2014 Total £

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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td>Other investment income</td>
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<td>Shop sales</td>
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<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,046,151</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,801,461</strong></td>
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Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other recognised gains and losses: 435,565

This is a summary of the financial information of the charity. For a full analysis of income, expenditure, balance sheet and fund information, please refer to the full audited accounts which were signed on the 22nd January 2016 and available from The Poppy Factory or the Charity Commission.
A BIG thank you

Many organisations have been vital to our ongoing success, and we would like to thank everybody for their support.

Notably:
The Astor Foundation
The Astor of Hever Trust
Lord Barnby’s Foundation
Bingham Hotel
The Brand Union
Deloitte
GC Gibson Charitable Trust
Greenwich Hospital
Inman Charity Trustees Limited
Misses Barrie Charitable Trust
M&S Richmond
The Princess Anne’s Charities
PwC
The Steel Charitable Trust

With a special mention to:
Join the conversation

Whether you want to learn about our events, tell us an inspirational story, or join in the digital conversation, we would love to hear from you.

poppyfactory.org
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Facebook/ThePoppyFactory

#Tag us!
#PoppyFactory
#TeamPoppyFactory
#500Challenge

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Prof Sir Bruce Keogh, KBE FRCS FRCP
Mr C Rogers
Maj Gen T Jeapes, CBE OBE MC

Council Members
Mr M R Perowne, FRICS (Chairman)
Mr H H Player (Vice Chairman)
Mr C S B Cook
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Mr P R Gill
Mr J P H S Wolff-Ingham
Mrs W S Hamilton

Chief Executive Officer
Mrs M D Waters, LLB MBA

General Manager/Secretary
Mr W R Kay

Registered charity number: 225348
Company number: 204405
We are building towards a future where every disabled veteran has the opportunity for meaningful work.