

Impact Report

2023 and 2024



Patron: His Majesty The King
Registered Charity 226686 (England & Wales).
SC037673 (Scotland).

Our Vision and Mission



Our vision is an RAF community that is connected, empowered and resilient.

In 2023 & 2024
we spent more than £21M
helping **individuals & families**
to lead the
independent & fulfilled
lives they **deserve**

To achieve our vision, we are committed to a simple yet important mission: **to support and enable the RAF community to meet the challenges of everyday life.**

The RAF Association's role is that of a central, coalescing force; one that brings together individuals and communities to improve the lives of those who serve and have served, their families and loved ones.

In 2023 and 2024, that role proved as vital as ever as the cost of living crisis continued to affect the lives of people within the RAF community.



Our Approach



We believe that we are at our strongest when we work together and that early intervention is most effective.

We not only helped members of the RAF community to endure times of acute need, we also prevented many of them from reaching crisis point.

Our greatest strength is our global community of supporters, which combines our members, volunteers and employees into one dedicated, expert and sustainable team of **over 66,000 people**, all committed to making lives better.

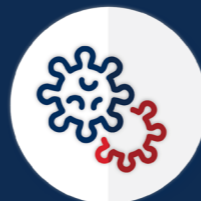
In 2024

89p of every **£1**

we raised
was spent on delivering **vital services**

to support **members of the RAF community**

To achieve our mission, throughout 2023 and 2024, our approach continued to be to:



Support all generations to sustain strong relationships and remain **connected** with the RAF



Empower our community by giving them the tools they need to live dignified, fulfilled, and independent lives



Help our RAF community overcome the challenges of everyday life by increasing **resilience** and wellbeing



Recognise the unique contribution made by those of all nations who serve and have served in the RAF

How we kept our community connected

From providing local veteran communities with places to find friendship and support, to alleviating the stress of separation for serving RAF families, we have helped our community to foster and sustain important bonds.

Every day, the RAF Association's Connections for Life service demonstrates the power of a simple phone call. The service continues to be a lifeline for thousands in the RAF community, reducing the mental and physical impacts of loneliness and isolation by pairing volunteers with beneficiaries to forge new friendships and help them reconnect with the outside world.



of those receiving regular calls through the RAF Association's Connections for Life service have increased their sense of social connection and decreased feelings of loneliness.



say a regular call from the RAF Association improves their sense of wellbeing.

In 2023 and 2024, we reduced loneliness and isolation by making over 50,000 calls to 3,214 people.

We have seen the impact that one telephone call can have in other ways too. Over the last two years, we have made 17,705 outreach calls to RAF veterans and their families to check on their wellbeing and find out if they needed help and support.

In 2024, one in five needed our help.



Thanks to our outreach calls those people are now able to live the dignified, fulfilled and independent lives they deserve.

Our network of 295 RAF Association branches, clubs and other groups continued to be an integral part of local community support networks. In 2023 and 2024, our branches hosted 3,176 wellbeing activities, helping to improve lives within our veteran communities by providing warm places and hot meals to those struggling to put food on the table.



They took action to help members of our community to maintain connections with loved ones who live far away, and they have created buddy systems to support older members of our community who are experiencing feelings of loneliness and isolation.

How we build resilience



We know how vitally important personal resilience is and we have continued to work to help build this within the RAF community by alleviating some of the additional strains caused by the unique nature of RAF service.

Over the last two years, we have continued to develop our 'Finding it Tough?' (FiT) programme for non-serving members of the community. Through education, FiT supports our RAF Whole Force by preventing everyday mental wellbeing challenges such as stress, anxiety and depression from developing into conditions requiring clinical intervention. In 2023 and 2024, 949 people took part in one of our three course variants.



Of the **296**

people we supported
through our **Navigating
Dementia courses**, 

99% felt better
equipped
to provide support
& better able to talk
about the subject 



We have helped ease the burden for serving personnel with distance caring responsibilities through our Navigating Dementia course and online hub. In 2024 we expanded this service further, introducing face to face course available to serving personnel, veterans and anyone in the RAF community dealing with the challenges associated with dementia.



93% of parents said **RAF
Kidz**
had improved
 **their child's
wellbeing**

Our support for service personnel and their families continued to grow in 2023 and 2024 with the expansion of our network of award-winning RAFAKidz nurseries. **With 17 settings across 14 locations**, RAFAKidz is now the largest provider of early years childcare to the RAF, directly supporting retention and operational effectiveness.

We understand that the needs of military families can be distinct, and we are careful to ensure those needs are met.

In 2024, we provided high-quality, affordable childcare to **2,338** children.

How we kept our community empowered



Through our field-force of highly-trained welfare casework volunteers, we were able to provide practical support, access to financial help, specialist services and advice to **7,806** individuals in 2023 and 2024.

 **95%**

of those supported by our casework volunteers said we had improved their sense of wellbeing.

Over half of cases involved emergency financial assistance. But our support went beyond simply the practical and financial help people received; the team helped them to regain a sense of purpose and belonging and to rebuild strong connections with the RAF community - making a tangible difference to their lives.

We have acted as an independent voice for members of our community through the RAF Families Federation, advocating, championing and providing reliable, trustworthy information in the areas that impact them the most.

We also provided representation, confidential advice and guidance for individuals struggling to navigate through compensation and pension claims.

Through our **four retirement living complexes**, we continue to create tight-knit communities where RAF veterans can live out their later years safely and independently, surrounded by like-minded people. We know that maintaining independence is important to our community. Our aim is to provide them with the best quality of life possible at the same time.



 **89%**

of those we supported through the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme service felt better after contacting our service.

At a glance

Every year, we make a tangible difference to the lives of thousands of members of our RAF community.

Here are just some of the ways we achieved that together in 2023 and 2024:



We made **17,705** outreach calls to RAF veterans and their families to check on their wellbeing. **2,120** of those who received a call were subsequently referred to one of our welfare services.



We helped **636** people who were affected by illness or injury to access **£6.2 million** through the Armed Forces Compensation scheme.



Our field-force of highly trained casework volunteers improved the lives of **7,806** individuals by providing practical support, financial help, specialist services and advice.



Our network of **17** RAFAKidz nurseries provided high quality, affordable childcare for the children of Service families, helping to improve wellbeing across the RAF Whole Force.



Our RAF Association Connections for Life service helped **3,214** individuals who were struggling with loneliness and isolation to feel happier and more connected.



We helped **1,008** deployed RAF parents to be part of their young children's daily lives, despite the separation caused by RAF Service, through our Doodle Box initiatives.



949 individuals took part in one of our 'Finding it Tough?' courses, helping to build better resilience across the Whole Force.



Our **four** retirement communities provided RAF veterans with a place to live out their later years safely and independently, surrounded by like-minded people.



Our Navigating Dementia courses and online hub helped **296** carers to improve their ability to support someone living with dementia.

How we made a difference



The Dixon Family

We gave the Dixon family memories to last a lifetime.

Martin and Nancy Dixon both served in the RAF and have two daughters, Faith and Rose. After being diagnosed with a rare life-limiting condition at 15-months-old, Faith needed constant monitoring, and Nancy gave up her job to become her full-time carer. The Association assessed the family's needs and arranged financial assistance, meaning the Dixons could enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime summer holiday.



"To be able to give the girls that lovely time – it means a lot"
- Nancy



Mark

Together, we made sure Mark could focus on his recovery from cancer.

When former RAF chef Mark Sully-Metters discovered he had prostate cancer at the age of 60, he was anxious about how he and his husband Baz would make ends meet. We helped him work through the options available to him and access some additional financial support to help cover the cost of household bills while he recovered from surgery.



"The support from the RAF Association took away some of my worry and stress. I could concentrate on my recovery."
- Mark



Oliver

We helped Oliver and Nivedita to find a home for them and their new baby.

Oliver was in the RAF for six years but left in 2008 after struggling with drug addiction. He met his future partner, Nivedita, in rehab but, after leaving the facility the couple had nowhere to live and Nivedita soon became pregnant. The Association's casework team stepped in to help, providing access to specialist services and supporting the couple to find their first home together.



"Without the support of the Association and the other charities, I don't know where we would have ended up. I don't even want to think about it."
- Oliver

Matt

We helped Matt to keep his dignity after his stroke.

When Matt, a former RAF Technician and father of two, suffered a stroke at the age of 44 he recorded goodbye messages for his children and was worrying about how the mortgage would be paid on his family's home. Thanks to the practical and emotional support provided by our casework team, Matt was able to access funds that would turn his family's life around.



"I'm stubborn, fierce and proud, but when something like this happens, you need a lifeline. And that's where the Association came in."
- Matt

Lois



"They understood the situation and they all genuinely cared. They really went above and beyond for us."
- Lois



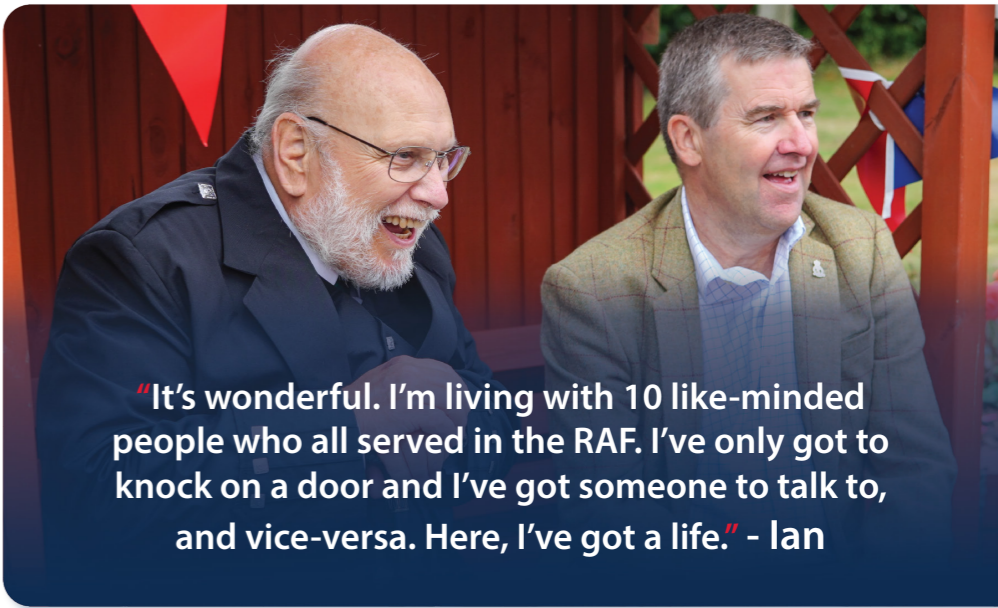
We helped Lois and Josh be there for their baby during life-saving surgery.

When baby Flynn needed complex surgery straight after birth, RAF Logistics Officer Lois O'Connor and her former RAF aircraft technician husband, Josh, were torn in two. The hospital was well over an hour away from their home and they were juggling being there for Flynn with looking after their other son, 18-month old Lando. On top of that the family were facing a sharp increase in costs with the hospital being so far from home. The RAF Association's casework and RAFAKidz teams stepped up, working together to provide a home from home for Lando during the day and securing emergency financial assistance to ease the burden of the extra costs.

Ian

We gave Ian back his sense of purpose.

RAF veteran Ian Oldfield was living alone and at a very low ebb when he signed up to the RAF Association's Connections for Life service. During his calls with his Connections for Life volunteer, Rich, we discovered that Ian was having mobility issues at home. Knowing about the Association's retirement accommodation, Rich broached the subject with Ian, who was soon booked in for a viewing at the Association's Wexford House in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. 18-months later and he had moved in, discovering a new lease of life.



"It's wonderful. I'm living with 10 like-minded people who all served in the RAF. I've only got to knock on a door and I've got someone to talk to, and vice-versa. Here, I've got a life." - Ian



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 RAF Association

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