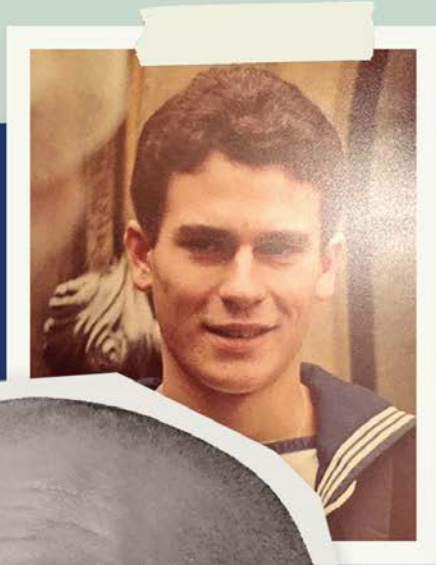


STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022



WHY A NEW STRATEGY?

Former servicemen and women have found support from Combat Stress since the charity began in 1919. Our work is as relevant today as it was after the First World War. We now provide evidence-based clinical programmes, alongside a much-needed 24-hour Helpline.

Demand for our services continues to grow – we have seen a 143% increase in referrals from ten years ago. This significant increase has made it more challenging to provide timely treatment to all those who need our help, with the resources we have available.

Our new five-year strategic plan aims to improve the recovery experience of veterans with mental health problems. We plan to use our resources as effectively as possible so that we can support veterans more quickly and more flexibly whilst raising the money needed to fund this work.

Our new strategy sets out a clear and effective vision for the future of veterans' mental health services in the UK, and means that, just as we have done for the last century, Combat Stress will remain the leader in this field.



Sue Freeth
Chief Executive



OUR PROPOSITION

**We are Combat Stress.
The UK's leading
charity for veterans'
mental health.**

For almost a century, we've helped former servicemen and women deal with issues like trauma, anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Today, we provide support to veterans from every service and every conflict.

On the phone and online.
In the community and at our treatment centres.

We're on a mission to raise awareness that invisible injuries can be just as hard to cope with as physical ones.

So when a veteran is having a tough time, we're there to help tackle the past and to help them take on the future.

OUR VISION

**We want former
servicemen and
women to lead full
and liberated lives
after military service,
in communities
that understand the
issues they face with
mental health.**

OUR CORE GOAL

**Improving veterans'
recovery experience**

To achieve this, we plan to focus on three strategic aims over the next five years:

- Deliver sustainable accessible services to meet the needs of veterans with mental health problems.
- Develop a distinct brand positioning to improve engagement and sustain and grow our financial base.
- Build a healthy, effective organisation.

The new strategic direction will help us to provide a simpler and more sustainable service that is more responsive to the needs of the veteran community.

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

1

Deliver sustainable accessible services to meet the needs of veterans with mental health problems

We will:

- Make service delivery simpler
- Make our services more easily understandable and sustainable
- Deliver more flexible services
- Meet the needs of veterans who have work and family commitments

Some of the things we plan to do:

Improve access and assessment to treatment

We plan to make accessing our services easier by simplifying and streamlining triage and assessment processes. We propose to introduce a single point of arrival and triage – our triage nurses will sit beside our Helpline

team for the first time from January 2018. This will improve the triage process so veterans have a quicker start to their recovery journey.

Integrate our treatment pathways

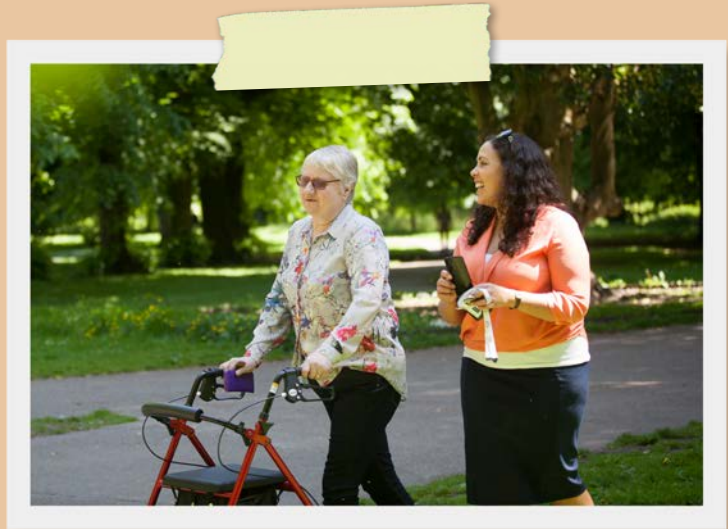
We propose integrating our treatment centres and community teams into regional teams. Working in this way will ensure veterans can access our services more easily and receive more coordinated support during their recovery journey.

Design more accessible treatment programmes

In addition to continuing to provide intensive residential treatment, we propose to design a number of non-residential modular programmes in the community that fit in with veterans' existing commitments, such as work or family life. We are also undertaking a pilot study to explore digital solutions, such as using Skype to improve access to therapy.

Continue to use research to develop our services and lead practice

Research is essential to deliver the most effective clinical services. We plan to continue our dedicated research in this area. The trials of our new treatment programmes will include robust research, clinical governance, independent academic review, and veterans' feedback. We will also develop how we share our expertise and knowledge worldwide.



2

Develop a distinct brand positioning to improve engagement and sustain and grow our financial base

To raise awareness of Combat Stress and veterans' mental health amongst priority audiences, we will develop a distinct brand positioning.

Some of the things we plan to do:

- With a new refreshed brand, we will engage more effectively with veterans and supporters.
- Our new website will provide veterans and supporters with a more accessible and engaging site. We will continue to develop the website to provide self-service help for veterans with mental health issues.
- Our new brand will help increase our supporter base by developing our relationship with existing and new supporters. Relationship building with supporters is our key focus: we are proud of the relationships we nurture. In the future, we will focus on making relationships stronger, better and longer – whilst welcoming new supporters to the Combat Stress family.

3

Build a healthy, effective organisation

To ensure the charity is efficient in its operation and makes effective use of resources, we will review and revise our ways of working across all areas.

Some of the things we plan to do:

- Develop a digital strategy that allows us to take advantage of technology across all of our areas of work to allow our employees to work more effectively and efficiently.
- Engage our committed and dedicated employees in developing a sustainable and high performing workforce.
- Embed a new set of shared organisational values to reflect the ambitions of the charity.

PAUL'S STORY



I owe Combat Stress so much – it gave me my life back.

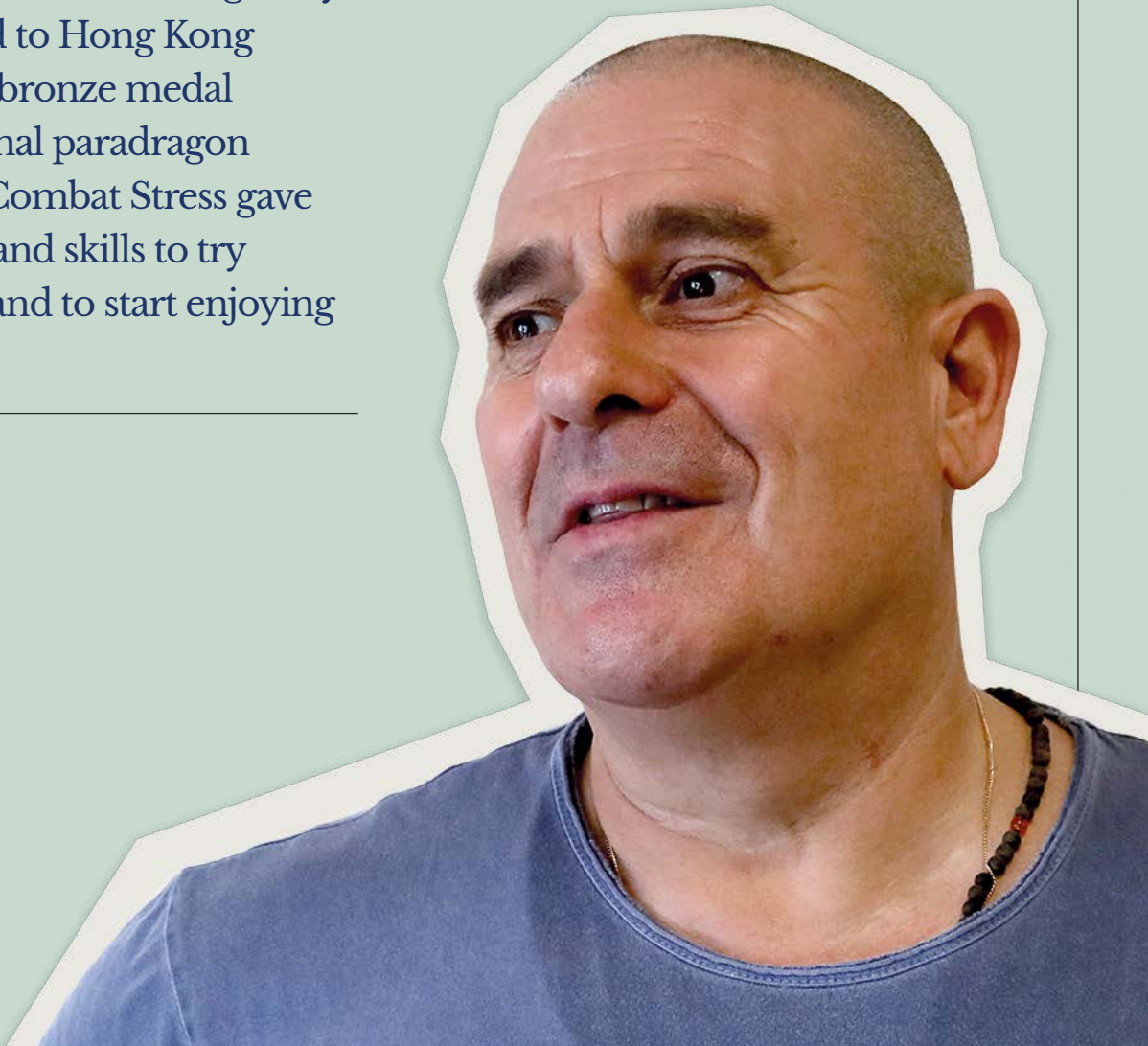
I used to think I was the only one in the world who felt like I did. But at Combat Stress I found that other people were going through it too.

I was a hermit before my treatment for PTSD but now I'm part of the Purple Warriors dragon boat racing team – we train regularly and I've travelled to Hong Kong where we won a bronze medal in the international paradragon championship. Combat Stress gave me the courage and skills to try something new and to start enjoying life again.”

Paul

Paul was 17 years old when he first served in the Falkland Islands conflict as a Royal Navy air engineering mechanic. He turned to alcohol after his experiences, drinking heavily for many years. He was also aggressive and found family life hard, shutting himself away each evening.

After treatment at Combat Stress, he's a changed man, living a happier and calmer life. Mindfulness is one of the tools he uses to manage his PTSD, using Buddhist prayer beads to ground himself when needed. He's got his wife, his family and his life back.



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