



ABOUT Launchpad

We supported 178 homeless Armed Forces Veterans during the 2024/25 year.

Launchpad – who we are and what we do

Launchpad are a homeless veterans charity, who have three supported housing schemes, in Newcastle, Durham and Liverpool, including 98 fully self-contained apartments for veterans.

Launchpad don't just provide a roof over the head of our veterans, we provide individually tailored, wrap around support for every individual. We have an excellent track record of achieving positive results, with around 80% of veterans moving on successfully, into independent living, 36% into employment, and 65% gaining valuable training to meet their needs and aspirations. Some veterans are unable to work for a range of different reasons, and our specialist team of Care Workers, Wellbeing and Activity Advisers, Psychotherapists and Independent Living Coordinators, help to support every resident into a positive, independent life, where we will continue to provide floating support, until they no longer require it.

Prior to coming to us, veterans were experiencing the following challenges:

- 88% were sleeping on the streets or sofa surfing.
- 81% experienced mental health problems, often service-related.
- 82% were long-term unemployed.
- 76% struggled to afford food & 67% survived thanks to food banks.
- 54% considered suicide to escape their challenges.
- 54% experiencing long term physical health or disability

Many say that they feel abandoned by the country which they served!

Launchpad provide up to two years' housing and wraparound support, to help veterans to address the underlying issues that have been contributing to their situation. For many individuals, we provide the first safe space that they have slept for months, or even years.

A high proportion of veterans that arrive at Launchpad are destitute and traumatised, owning only a carrier bag of personal possessions. On arrival, we provide each person with a comprehensive welcome pack including the main household items which they need, along with five days' worth of food. We help veterans to claim their benefit entitlements, which part-funds their support and sign post them to key organisations as required. Next, and only when they are ready to do so, we help every veteran to develop a personal action plan to address their complex needs. We work with many specialist partners to help veterans achieve their goals, including the NHS, SSAFA, Combat Stress, RBL and many local housing and employment partners.

Since our founding in 2013, Launchpad has supported over 829 homeless veterans.

Over the last year, 80% of veterans leaving us successfully moved on to long-term accommodation. Given that most were previously sleeping on the streets, we are deeply proud of this achievement.



Michael joined the Army in 2007 and served 9 years, including in Afghanistan. He witnessed a friend's death in an IED strike, which resulted in PTSD – something he tried to self-manage through alcohol.

Eventually, his relationship broke down, he found himself homeless and he tried to take his own life.

“Launchpad gave me a place to get the right help at the time I needed it most. The help I have received has been second to none.”

Commented [MC1]: I don't have these figures to check

More veterans than ever supported – more successful leavers!



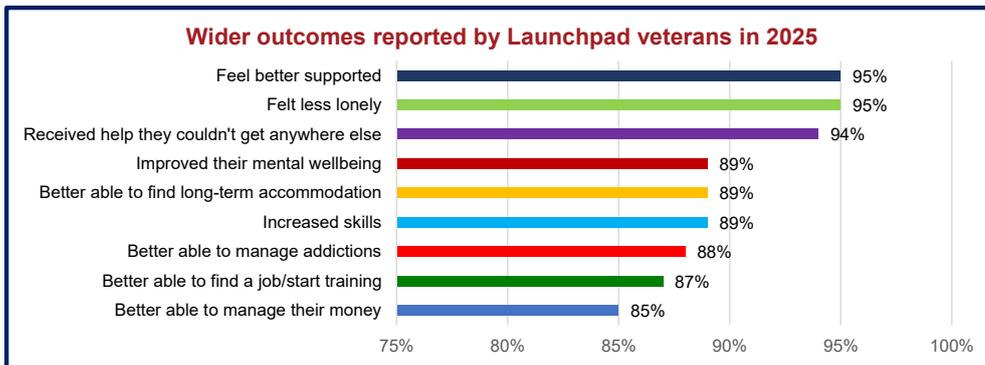
The last 12 months have been the most successful in our history. In the year to 30th June 2025 (our last financial year), we supported 178 homeless veterans - 10% more than last year and 35% more than four years ago.

Pictured left is Adam, a resident who has secured a job with Sunderland University.

Most importantly, 80% of leavers moved on successfully either to an independent home of their own or to settled accommodation with the support they need to thrive. This is a significant increase from the 62% successful move-on rates we achieved just four years ago. There are many reasons for our increased success. Most significant perhaps, is the ability we've had since 2023 to provide psychotherapy to help veterans overcome mental health problems and associated addictions, together with increased employment support. This extra support is only possible thanks to kind donations from the government and other funders.

Outcomes achieved thanks to your support

Each year, we ask our residents to complete an in-depth evaluation to assess the wider difference our work is making and to enable continuous improvement to our services. The results of our most recent evaluation in spring 2025 are shown below.



These underlying improvements in confidence and wellbeing are critical contributors to enabling 80% of our veterans to successfully move on to settled accommodation and 36% to secure employment.

Stuart's Story



"I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for support I got from Launchpad. My life has changed for the better and I'm in the right place to see my future and hopefully gain full time employment – that is my goal."

Stuart joined the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in 1990, aged 16. Soon after starting, he heard that his best friend, who was serving in Northern Ireland, had been fatally shot in the head.

This had a huge and life-changing effect on Stuart's mental health, which was made worse when he witnessed (and survived) the tsunami in Thailand in 2004. He stayed out in Thailand for three weeks to help the clean-up operation, but during his stay he says he witnessed things he says "no one ever wants to experience." Twice, Stuart tried to take his own life, and he still suffers from nightmares and flashbacks. Most recently, he made a further suicide attempt after being made redundant from a job which came with accommodation, leaving him both homeless and unemployed.

Stuart came to live with us in April 2024 - we provided support for his mental health and helped him secure re-employment training with the RMF Group in driving and groundworks. We're delighted to report that Stuart's health is much improved, and he has now successfully moved on to independent accommodation. He says: *"I am so*

grateful for support from Launchpad, and even though I have now moved out, I'm in constant contact with the staff for support and the residents who I have made my friends."

We provide a wide range of 'diversionary' activities for veterans to undertake during the day, including volunteering opportunities, sport, mindfulness, arts and music. These keep veterans focused on their recovery, helping them to avoid falling back into self-destructive behaviours. They also enable them to build positive, supportive relationships with their peers, to support their recovery.



Each house has an Employment and Training Co-ordinator who works alongside veterans once their mental health has stabilised and helps them gain skills and experience for employment. We work in partnership with many local employers and training organisations, including Esh Construction, BAE Systems, Learning Curve and Speke Training and Education Centre, who provide work experience and skills development.



When the veterans' health has stabilised and they are ready to move on, typically after a year, we help them find long-term, settled accommodation. Each house has an Independent Living Co-ordinator who helps the veterans identify suitable places to move on to and continues to support them for around two years whilst they adapt to independent living.

We know that, for many veterans, the period after they leave is high risk, and so our Independent Living Co-ordinators help them engage with support providers in their new area to maintain their recovery.

We work alongside many specialist partners, including the NHS who provide physical and mental health support, although the latter has extremely long waiting lists and NHS mental health support is often insufficient for those with military-related PTSD and associated addictions. Other close partners include Combat Stress, CRISIS Skylight, Walking with the Wounded and the Royal British Legion.

Our People

Our executive management team consists of our Chief Executive, the managers of our three houses and our Company Secretary and a Head of Finance. We have a board of ten Trustees who provide strategic leadership and bring a range of senior commercial, military, and homelessness expertise.



Jill Murray (pictured left) is our Chief Executive Officer. She has a long history with Launchpad – it was her vision as Chief Executive of the Byker Community Trust to set up a charity supporting homeless veterans in Newcastle that led to our creation in 2013.

Jill has over 44 years' experience working within the housing sector, including over nine years' as Chief Executive of a housing association and is the immediate Past President of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Our three residences are each led by highly experienced managers. Phil Thompson, manager of Avondale and Hollyacre Houses, has 31 years' military service and previously has managed homeless veterans' projects in Newcastle, Gateshead and Middlesbrough.

Samantha Jackson, manager of Speke House, has 20 years' experience leading homelessness projects and 34 years' experience in care and support. Our Head of Finance, Silvana Michelini is a qualified accountant, she manages the business plan, budgets etc and produces monthly accounts for the management team and the Board.

Our Trustees include Armed Forces veterans and experts in governance, audit and risk, housing, HR, health and homelessness. Our Board meets quarterly as a minimum, and it is supplemented by a Finance and Risk Committee and a Governance and Remuneration Committee who also meet quarterly.

Commented [MC2]: Add Silvana as Head of Finance?

Lucy Perriam, our Chair, is a veteran of the Women's Royal Army Corps, she came top of her year at Sandhurst Military Academy. She also chairs East Lothian's Children's Panel and is an experienced homelessness mentor.

Ian Dormer, our Vice Chair has a wide and diverse background in public service, education and engineering. He serves as an independent member of the Audit & Risk Committee for Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council and is Director of Herbert Dove Trustees, overseeing JT Dove – a significant builder's merchant. Other NED experience incl. Chair of the Primary Science Teaching Trust, Chair of Newcastle College, Institute of Directors and the Regional Development Agency ONE North East. He is also the managing director/owner of Rosh Engineering Ltd which specialises in high-voltage equipment across the UK and Northern Europe.

Other trustees are:

- Major Ken McMillan MBE, Ken joined the Army at 17 and served in all major conflicts since the Falklands. He is a co-founder of Launchpad and was awarded the MBE in 1998 for his work.
- Sarah Louise-McCartney runs a marketing consultancy and has 22 years' board-level experience.
- Richard Dixon-Warren has 40 years' service in the Army and sits on the Lincolnshire Committee of the Army Benevolent Fund.
- Mark Underhill OBE has recently retired as Chief Executive of the North West of England Reserve Forces Association.
- Katherine McGough is a highly experienced HR and Organisational Development professional, she is currently Director of People Services at North Star Housing Group. Katherine's expertise encompasses strategic change management, policy development and performance management
- Chris Smith has over 38 years' experience in the social housing sector and retired from her role as Deputy Chief Executive of Thirteen Housing Group in July 2025. She has experience in homelessness, supported housing and community regeneration.
- Aaron Sahota works as a senior manager at PwC – a leading global firm in professional services and consulting. He specialises in internal audits and health & safety and has worked in regulated environments in the public sector.
- Paul Baker OBE was the Deputy Commander of British Forces in Afghanistan, and now is Chief Executive of the North East of England Reserve Forces Association.