

# ANNUAL REVIEW

AND IMPACT REPORT  
**2015/16**



Royal Air Force  
Benevolent Fund



“Our research on the needs of the RAF family has allowed us to prioritise and focus our resources to those areas of most need.”



## REACHING MORE PEOPLE, IMPROVING OUR SUPPORT

The past year has seen continued progress for the RAF Benevolent Fund, with a number of new services introduced to further improve our support to our beneficiaries and an increased fundraising performance which allowed us to sustain that vital welfare work. Our Reaching Out Campaigns through regional media resulted in a very significant number of new cases for us, reinforcing our view that many who need assistance also need help to find us. This, linked to the completion of a comprehensive piece of research on the needs within the RAF family, has allowed us to prioritise and focus our resources to those areas of most need.

The charity world in general, and some charities in particular, have found themselves in the media spotlight for much of the past year. While we rightly find ourselves in independent surveys as one of the most trusted charities, reflecting what we believe are our high ethical and moral standards in areas such as fundraising and governance, we have nevertheless taken the opportunity afforded by this

increased external scrutiny of the sector to review all of our policies and practices. Few changes were required and we believe that we remain at the forefront of best practice in all areas of our operations.

None of this would be possible without the very capable and hardworking staff who have managed to generate more than £24m last year and use it to transform the lives of those who need our assistance. But I must finish by also recognising the incredible generosity of so many individuals and organisations who donate to us so that we can continue with that work. We could not do it without you – thank you!

**Lawrie Haynes**  
Chairman, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

“The RAF Benevolent Fund were there for me and my family through the hardest time and now I am able to give something back so they can help others in similar circumstances.”

Former Corporal and RAFBF beneficiary, Stuart Robinson



“The RAFBF’s new Seaside Apartments gave us a chance to spend time together as a family. Having Princess Marina House next door also gave my mother-in-law the peace of mind to travel with us and enjoy a wonderful family holiday.”

Squadron Leader  
Tim Thresher



## CONTENTS

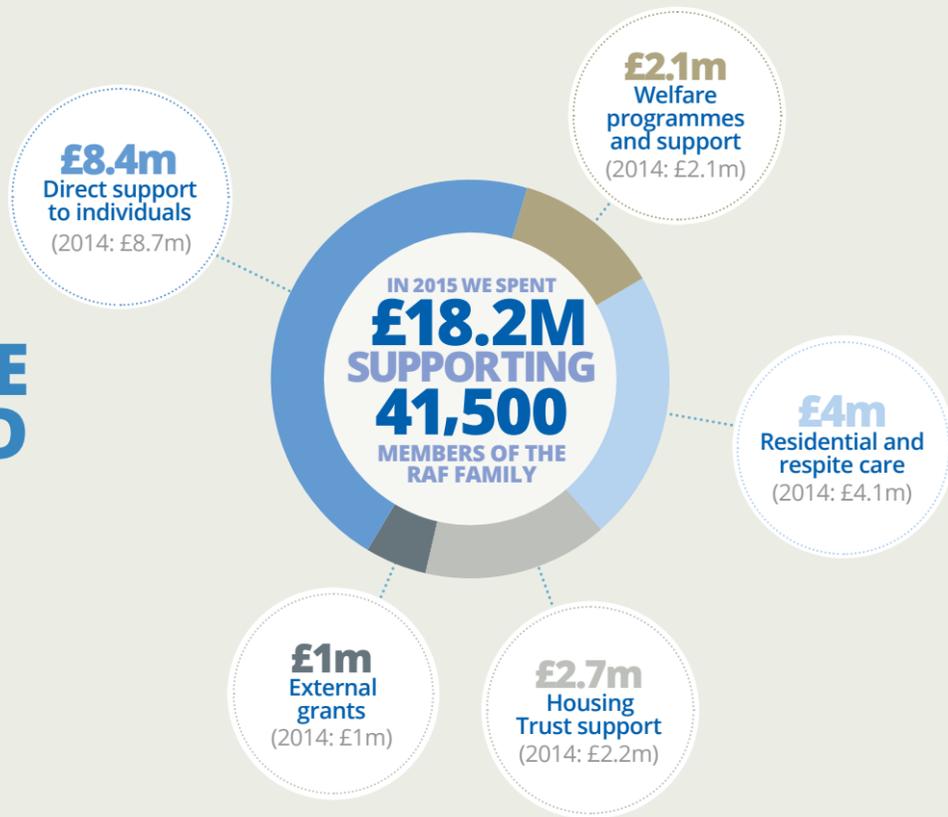
OUR IMPACT	04
OLDER VETERANS	06
YOUNGER VETERANS	07
SUPPORTING THE SERVING	08
RAF STATIONS OVERVIEW	10
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	12
PAYING TRIBUTE	14
FUNDRAISING	16
CONTROLLER'S MESSAGE	18

# HOW WE HELPED THOSE MOST IN NEED

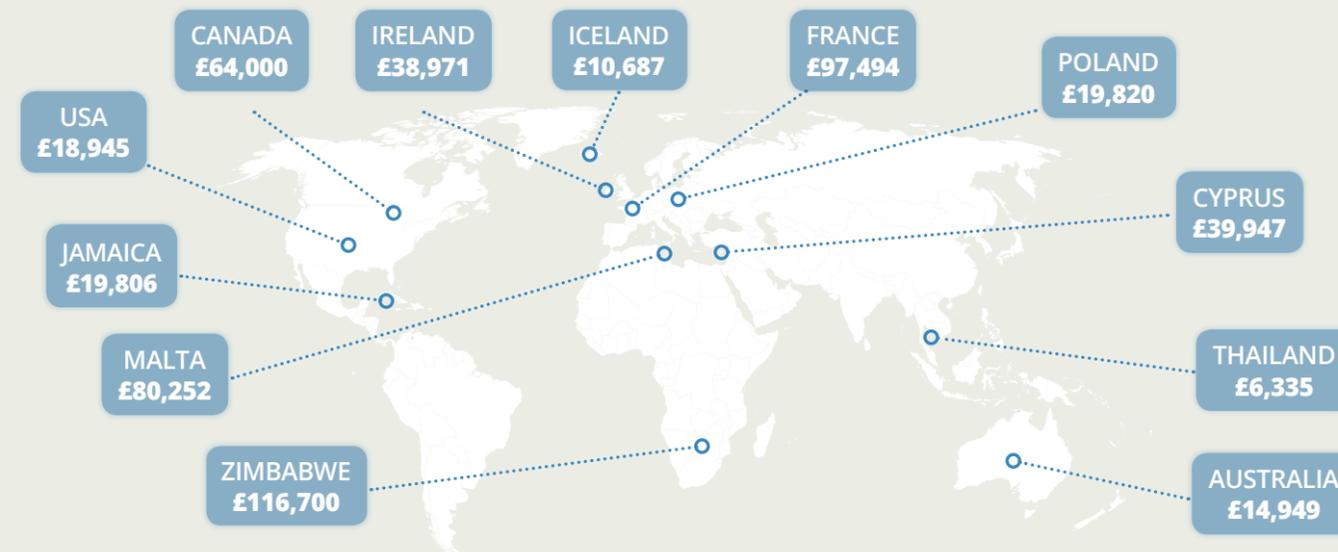
We know that our support makes a real difference to those members of the RAF family who are struggling or find they need that little extra support.

According to research carried out by the Fund in 2015, self-care, mobility and isolation were amongst the top welfare needs of the RAF veteran community.

As a result, we have expanded our welfare provision and are already seeing the difference it is making to the RAF family.



## £750K SUPPORTING FORMER RAF PERSONNEL IN MORE THAN 30 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING:



**£800K** identified in unclaimed benefit entitlement by the new Advice and Advocacy Service

### WE'RE THERE FOR THE HARD TIMES

Former RAF Cpl Gary Pammenter left his 18-year career in the RAF to care for his son Jamie, who was diagnosed with a rare muscle-wasting disease, which will limit his life expectancy. Thanks to the Fund's support life has been made a little easier for them.

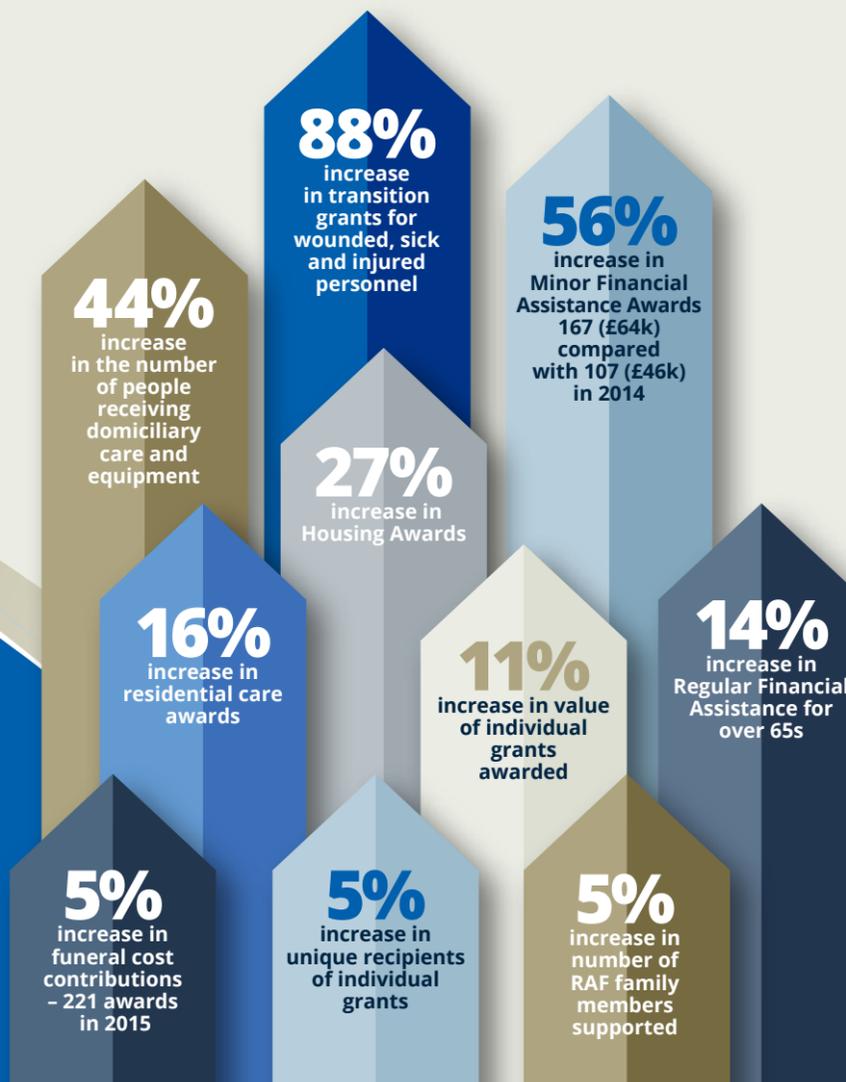
The Fund recently purchased a new electric wheelchair for Jamie and redesigned the garden to make it more accessible.

The new chair, described as 'cool' by Jamie, is fully adjustable allowing him to use school desks of all different heights and also has an adjustable foot rest so he can stretch his legs.

Gary said: "Without the Fund being there from day one we would have really struggled. Just knowing they were a phone call away literally made such a big difference to us."



### HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE RAF FAMILY





## A GRANT FOR GLADYS

Gladys Hooper was born in 1903, the year the Wright Brothers made the first powered flight, carmaker Henry Ford produced the first Ford Model A and Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst set up the Women's Social and Political Union.

Gladys' husband, Leslie Hermiston Hooper, was a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War and went on to join the Royal Air Force. Gladys, who celebrated her 113th birthday on 18 January 2016, was recently supported by us when she needed assistance with her care home top-up fees so she could remain close to her family. Her son Derek, who was also an RAF pilot, said: "Care home fees are very expensive and every penny is helpful. We are all extremely grateful to the RAF Benevolent Fund for their support."

**£7m**  
SPENT ON  
INDIVIDUAL GRANTS  
SUPPORTING RAF  
VETERANS



**1,109**  
elderly veterans  
received regular  
financial assistance



**£754k**  
spent on mobility  
including  
wheelchairs  
and scooters



**£2.9m**  
spent on housing and  
adaptations for the RAF family



**£570k**  
spent on care home  
top-up fees



**£112k**  
spent on retraining  
and transition grants



**1,168**  
guests enjoyed  
a respite break  
at Princess  
Marina House

## HELPING JACK STAY IN HIS OWN HOME

For 90-year-old Clarence Ball (known as Jack) staying in the home he has lived in for 15 years is incredibly important.

But with the onset of early Alzheimer's, it was becoming harder for Jack, who was a Radio Operator in the RAF, to live alone without support. The RAF Benevolent Fund now pays towards a carer, which enables Jack to stay in the home he loves.

Jack said: "I've always been independent and don't want to go into a home – I couldn't cope with the restrictions! This is my home, this is where I enjoy my life and the RAF Benevolent Fund's help has enabled me to continue living here."



## SUPPORT FOR JAMES

In 2004 James Faulkner was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour following a violent seizure which ended his career as an RAF policeman.

The seizure broke his back in three places and dislocated both shoulders. Following chemotherapy treatment James is in remission but the tumour will limit his life.

James, his wife Sarah and their three-year-old daughter, Eliza, now live in one of our Housing Trust properties and we also supported James on his new career path – as an award-winning ceramicist.

James said: "The Fund provided a home for our family and financial assistance when times were tough. Their support has enabled us to concentrate on spending time together as a family as I battle my illness."

Sarah, a Flight Operations Assistant, not only knows the difference the Fund has made to her life, but she regularly sees its impact on others.

"I see the Fund's impact every day. I know that schemes like Airplay youth clubs on RAF stations help many RAF dads and mums like me continue their careers and provide the best for their children," she said.

**£3.37m**  
SUPPORTING  
SERVING RAF AND  
THEIR FAMILIES.  
AN INCREASE OF  
20% ON 2014

## NEW SERVICES SUPPORTING SERVING PERSONNEL

Family life in the RAF is a life like no other. That's why the RAF Benevolent Fund continues to roll out new support services to make life easier for serving families.

In 2015 we launched Building Stronger Families, a free online course which gives users the skills and knowledge to deal with common relationship issues facing couples and families. In the first month more than 100 people had accessed the course.

In direct response to overwhelming demand, we renovated two new seaside apartments which were officially opened by HRH The Duke of Kent in December and have doubled our capacity.

This is on top of the support we have always provided for serving personnel and their families including our youth support programme, Airplay, Relate counselling and assistance with disability, bereavement and financial distress.

“The Relate sessions that we had kept us together ultimately. I do not think we would have our little girl and the life that we do now if it wasn't for the RAF Benevolent Fund. And for that I will be forever grateful.”

Chris, 33, from Birmingham, is currently serving with the RAF



**£1.1m**

on Airplay



**28** RAF stations now have Airplay play parks including 20 multi-use games areas, 50 play parks, 10 shelters and 4 trim trails for families

**3,635** children and young people participated in Airplay



**265**

individuals received a grant to assist with emergencies and family difficulties



**£57k**

spent funding CAB outreach clinics on RAF stations



**£153k**

spent on relationship support

**570** unique clients used Relate. The number of RAF personnel who rated their relationship as 'good' or 'very good' following counselling increased by 135%



**528**

guests enjoyed a break at the Seaside Cottages – an increase of 27% on 2014

“PTSD is a silent killer that challenges every part of your life.

Support from the Benevolent Fund means I can concentrate on moving forward and getting back to the person I was before my accident.”



## HOW WE SUPPORTED PATRICK

After serving in Afghanistan in 2013 with the RAF Regiment, Patrick Little, 28, successfully trained as a Forward Air Controller. But at the same time he was silently battling with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as well as pain from a previous leg injury. Unable to manage any longer, he sought help in 2014 when his PTSD left him too distressed to leave the house.

Thanks to support from the RAF's Personnel Recovery Unit and the Fund, Patrick is focusing on a new career path beyond the RAF and future-proofing his home in case his disability worsens over time.

The RAF Benevolent Fund has funded Project Management courses and major works to the family's garden, including a garden room with gym equipment where Patrick can exercise to improve his mobility and have the peace he needs when things get too much.

As Patrick's wife Jonie explains: "Patrick's physical and mental disabilities often leave us housebound. Having an outdoor space will help with the claustrophobic feeling I know he often gets when he can't get out and pursue a normal life like everyone else."

# RAF STATION FOCUS: RAF NORTHOLT



“Having the support of the Fund is pivotal in terms of how we function as a station.”

Station Commander, Group Captain David Manning



Frequent moves, separation and upheaval are a fact of life for many serving RAF personnel. By providing a web of support around 28 RAF stations across the country, we help to relieve the stresses on personnel and their families. We dropped in at RAF Northolt to find out about the impact our support is having on the RAF community there.

For Station Commander, Group Captain David Manning, the Fund's support is vital on a station where personnel and families are widely dispersed.

He says: “As Station Commander, my primary focus is the well-being of all of the personnel, indeed our Whole Force, based here at RAF Northolt. The welfare support that the Benevolent Fund offers to our individuals and families is so invaluable and hugely appreciated.”

Squadron Leader Caroline Costello, Officer Commanding Personnel Management Squadron, knows first-hand the difference our support makes to families. “The RAF Benevolent Fund's contribution to the well-being and support we can offer to our personnel on station is enormous. From providing youth activities like Airplay and play facilities, to welfare provision to personnel and families going through tough times, everyone recognises the value and benefit that the Fund brings. They make lives better.”



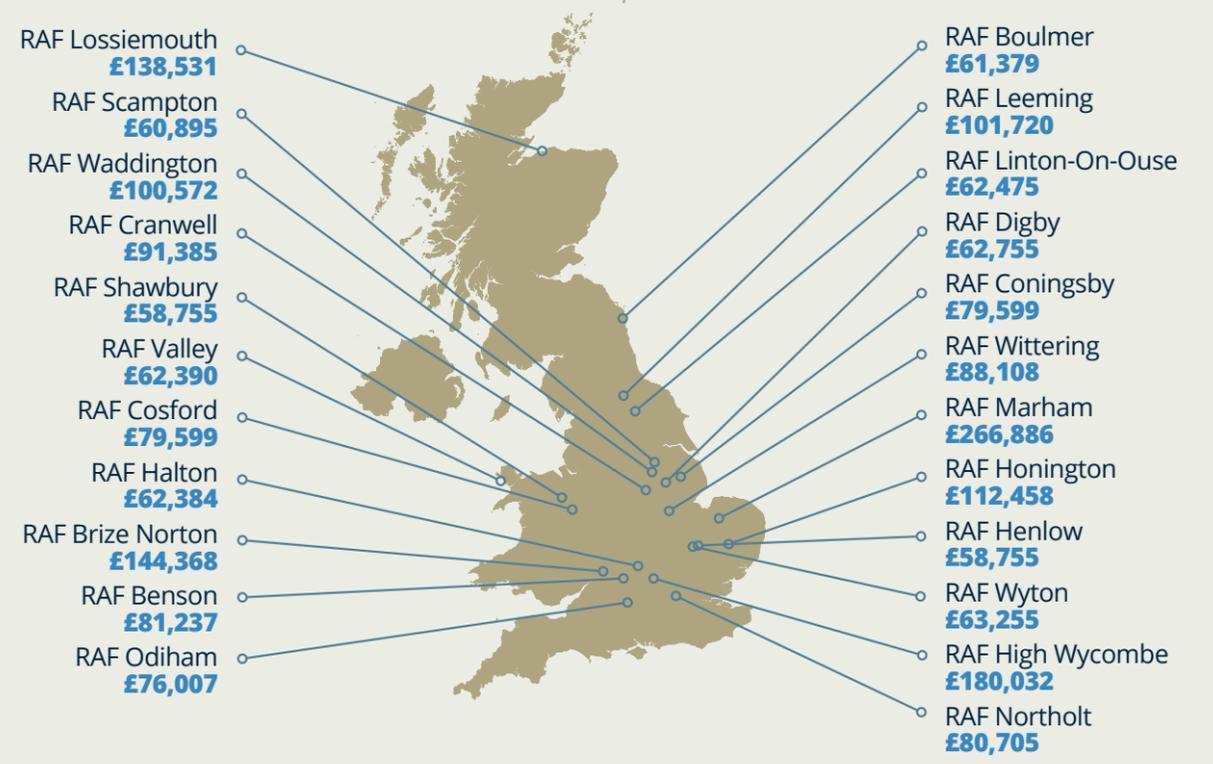
## OUR SUPPORT AT RAF NORTHOLT IN 2015

**£80,705**  
welfare spend on serving  
personnel and their families

**£15,250**  
spent on individual support

**£51,600**  
spent on Airplay

## WE SPENT **£3.37M** SUPPORTING THE SERVING RAF IN 2015



# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

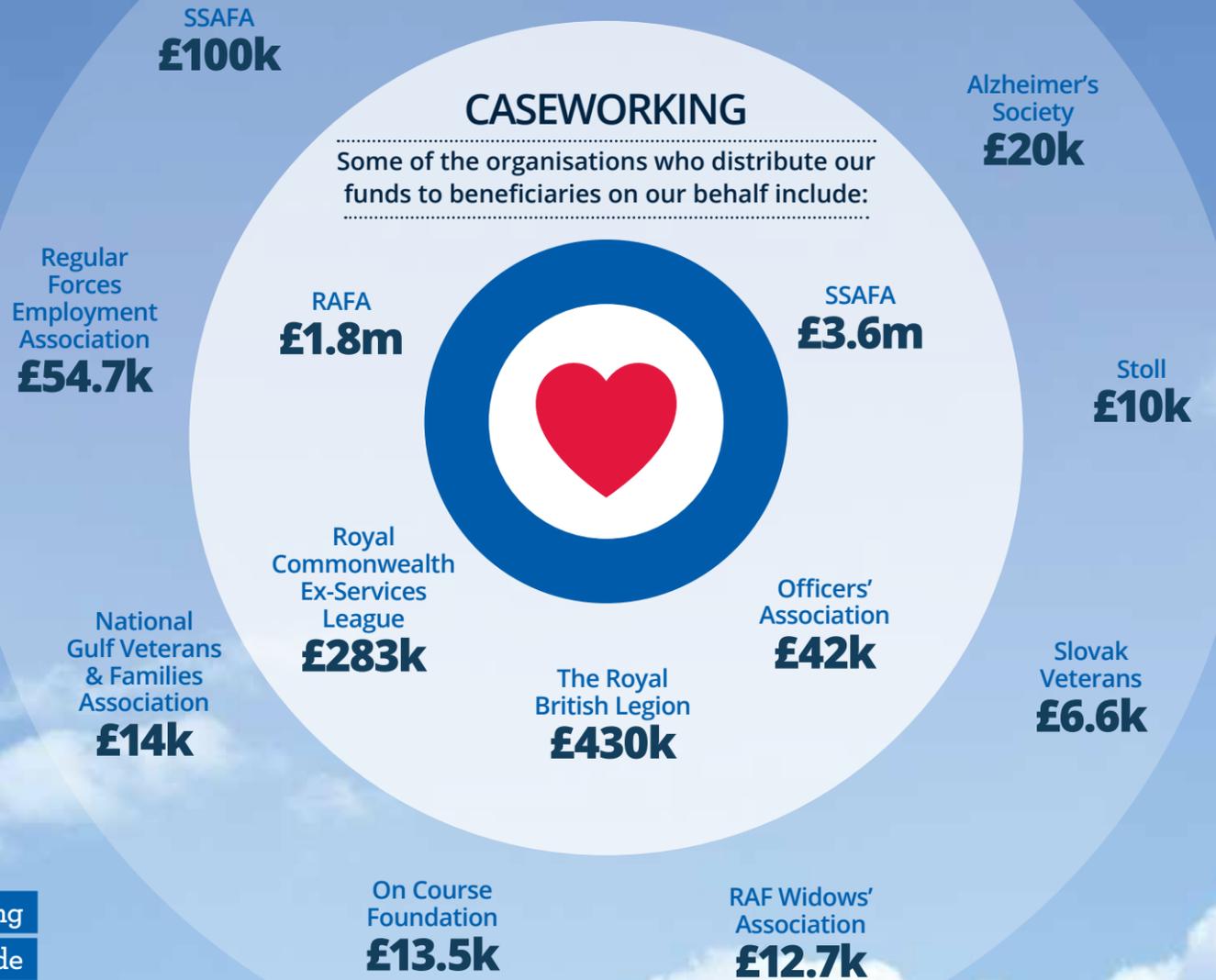
We work in partnership with a number of charities and organisations to ensure members of the RAF family get the right support when they need it.

Last year we gave £1m in external grants to 53 charities and organisations, including SSAFA, Alzheimer's Society and Combat Stress. In total 21,569 members of the RAF family were supported by other charities funded by us.

There are a number of caseworking organisations, including RAFA, SSAFA and The Royal British Legion, who distribute funds to beneficiaries on our behalf.

## EXTERNAL GRANTS

Our grants and support enable these charities to provide crucial help and advice to the RAF family. We spent £1m providing 53 grants including:



## CASEWORKING

Some of the organisations who distribute our funds to beneficiaries on our behalf include:

“ We have developed some exciting new partnerships to help us provide support for the changing and complex needs of the RAF family. Working with us, organisations such as Anxiety UK and Community Network will really help to provide the sort of support that the RAF family have told us they need. ”

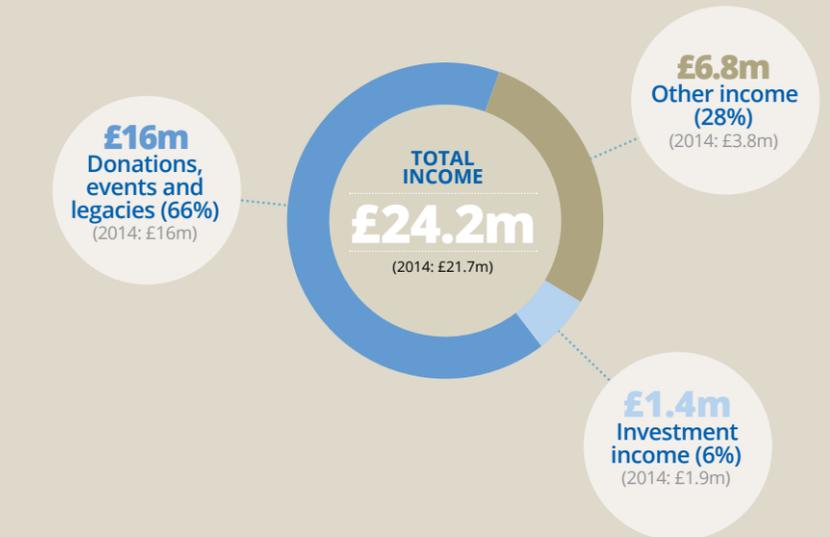
Alison Wyman, Head of Welfare Programmes & Development

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

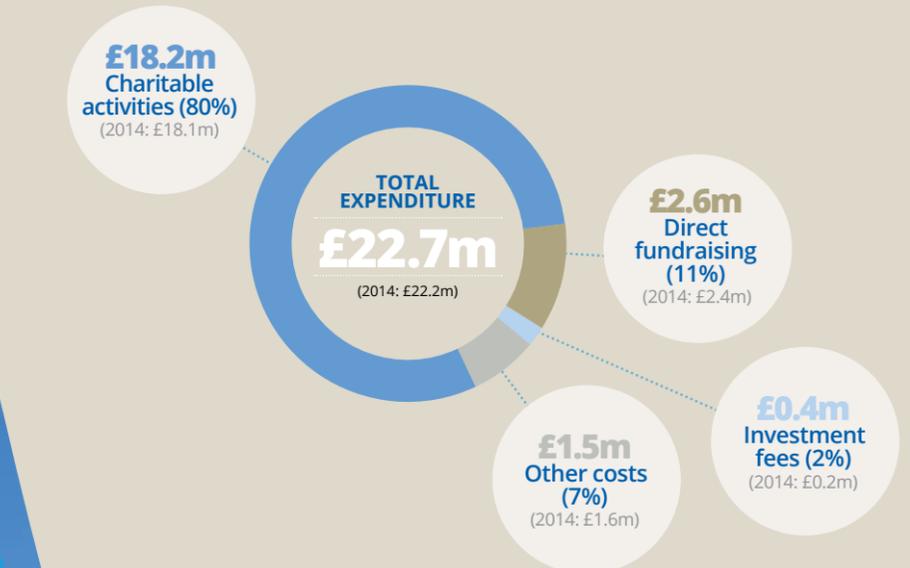
2015 was yet another fantastic year for fundraising. Donations, events and legacies raised an incredible £16m while serving personnel donated a total of £1.6m through the Service Day's Pay Giving.

These donations are our lifeblood; they help to enhance so many lives and we are extremely grateful for all the donations we receive, both large and small.

## WHERE OUR MONEY CAME FROM



## TOTAL EXPENDITURE



## HONOURING 'THE FEW'



BATTLE OF BRITAIN

In 2015 we joined the nation to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, honouring the incredible heroism of 'The Few' who sacrificed so much for the freedom we enjoy today.

Working with the RAF Museum we organised a commemorative dinner at RAF Northolt for 400 guests and we were very honoured to have some Battle of Britain veterans attend.

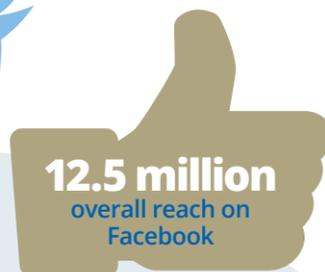
We were delighted to work with a number of corporate partners, who were keen to commemorate the Battle and support us at the same time, including Breitling and Shepherd Neame (see p16).

Our website has become a fantastic archive for future generations, hosting a wealth of content about the Battle, including first-hand accounts from those involved which were also shared across social media.

Our Battle of Britain press coverage generated more than 1,000 stories, with a circulation of more than 185 million and an advertising equivalent value of £1.38 million.



2.5 million  
Twitter  
impressions



12.5 million  
overall reach on  
Facebook



Battle of Britain veterans enjoy the Battle of Britain dinner at RAF Northolt

“There was nothing between England and the German armies but the RAF. We knew we were fighting for our lives.”



### A MEMBER OF THE GROUND CREW TELLS HIS STORY

The ground crew, who serviced the mighty Spitfires and Hurricanes during the Battle of Britain, worked day and night to keep the pilots in the air. We told the story of Stan Hartill who was just 19 years old when he joined the RAF as an airframe fitter. Stan joined 609 Squadron and was looking after Spitfires at Middle Wallop when the Battle of Britain broke out.

Stan was supported by us after he found it difficult to pay the maintenance charge on his flat.

Stan said: “I’d always wanted to stay in my own home but when my maintenance charge was increased I couldn’t stretch to it.

“To this day I really appreciate the help the RAF Benevolent Fund has given me – the calls on them must be tremendous and I’m such a small cog but I’ll be indebted to them for the rest of my days.”



2015 also marked 70 years since the end of the Second World War. Our special VE Day and VJ Day blogs told the stories of the crowds who flooded the streets back home to celebrate the end of the war and of the men and women who were still fighting overseas.

The stories included Typhoon fighter pilot Derek Lovell, who received the best present of all on 5 May 1945, when Germany announced its surrender to the Allied forces on his 23rd birthday and 18-year-old WAAF Joan Fraser, a regular visitor to Princess Marina House, who joined the throngs gathered in Trafalgar Square.



“We were pleased when the war was over but it was horrific at the same time. You could not be too joyful. If it had been just beating Germany, then fair enough but the fact that all those people were killed made it different.”

Former WAAF Joan Fraser



We commemorated the 70th anniversary of two key operations that Bomber Command were involved with, Operation Manna (food drops over Holland) and Operation Exodus (liberating POWs). We created a series of blogs and videos based on interviews with RAF veterans and serving personnel. For Operation Manna this included an in-depth look at the legacy of the mission and the humanitarian work of the RAF since. Coinciding with the Nepal earthquake relief effort, it was well received.

Former Air Gunner Warrant Officer Dave Fellowes told how he and his Bomber Command crew dropped food supplies for the starving Dutch people during the Second World War. “People were desperate. They were eating cats, dogs, rats – even grinding up tulip bulbs to make flour,” recalled Dave.

Recently we have been able to provide Dave with support as he is a regular visitor to our respite home Princess Marina House.

Dave says: “It is one of the finest places you can go to. It is five-star treatment, it really is beautiful.”

## WE ♥ OUR FUNDRAISERS!

The 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain proved to be an ideal springboard for fundraising and we were delighted to be the chosen charity for many leading corporate organisations.

Swiss watchmaker Breitling produced 75 limited edition Navitimer wristwatches with proceeds from the sale going to the Fund.

Our relationship with Shepherd Neame has been brewing for 25 years and they continued their support during the commemorations through the sale of a range of products, including our roundel on more than 2.4 million bottles of beer and donating thousands of pounds of stock to support our Battle of Britain dinner.

A huge thank you to the thousands of supporters and fundraisers who shook buckets, baked cakes, ran marathons and did a myriad of other events for us.



“I’ve still got all my friends from the RAF and I’ve seen some lads struggling so the RAF Benevolent Fund is a charity that is close to me. The RAF is like family, you never lose your RAF mates.”

### ONE MAN... IN A BIG BLUE DRESS

Former RAF chef Colin Burgin-Plews was so determined to stand out from the crowds in the People’s Run 2 Remember in Sunderland that he ran the 5k race in a big blue RAFBF dress.



### EDINBURGH TATTOO DRUMS UP £75,000

We were delighted to receive £75,000 from long-standing supporter the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo following another hugely successful year in 2015. The show observed the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in honour of ‘The Few’.

### THOUSANDS GET STUCK INTO OUR GREAT BRITISH SUNDAY LUNCH

On 13 September thousands of people gathered around their dinner tables to join our first national fundraising event – the Great British Sunday Lunch. RAF stations up and down the country, including RAF High Wycombe, RAF Marham, RAF Cosford and RAF Waddington took part while meals were also hosted in Cyprus, the Falkland Islands, and California.

### TREGOTHNAN BREW UP CHURCHILL’S FINEST

For some, you cannot get more British than a cup of tea and England’s only home-grown tea producer, Tregothnan, launched a special tea called Churchill’s Finest to commemorate the Battle and raise funds for us.

### GLORIOUS GOODWOOD

Tweeds and Trilby hats, frills and frocks – it can only be the Goodwood Revival. We were delighted when Lord March selected us as the benefiting charity at the 2015 event. The generous donations made both at the event and at the Battle of Britain flypast the following week raised more than £77k.



**£16m**  
RECEIVED IN VOLUNTARY INCOME INCLUDING DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

### THESE SUITS WERE MADE FOR WALKING

They are more accustomed to boardrooms and finance than peat bogs and tussock grass in freezing temperatures but a group of businessmen took on the historic Falklands Yomp for us last year and raised more than £200,000.

Eleven members of the April Fools Club took part in the 120km expedition which followed the route taken by the Royal Marines 45 Commando Group in 1982 from San Carlos to Stanley. The money raised went towards building the Fund’s two Seaside Apartments.



### PEDAL POWER FROM PARIS

There were a few sore legs and saddles but 52 cyclists made a triumphant return to London in September after cycling 211 miles on Brompton bikes from Paris to London to raise money for the Fund.

Commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, the ride, which was sponsored by Thales UK, raised more than £58,000 for the Fund.

### OUR FUNDRAISING PROMISE

We are committed to fundraising responsibly and respectfully. We promise to fundraise with integrity, accuracy, respect and with no pressure. Read more about our fundraising promise at [www.rafbf.org/promise](http://www.rafbf.org/promise)

“ We will continue to fund further new welfare programmes to address a wider range of needs amongst the elderly and those still serving. ”



Our President, HRH The Duke of Kent, and RAFBF Controller Air Marshal Chris Nickols, officially open the Fund's new Seaside Apartments in West Sussex

## RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE RAF FAMILY

Although we remain acutely aware of the need to minimise the cost of running the charity so that we can pass as much on to our beneficiaries as possible, we saw some modest expansion in the past year. This was a direct result of introducing a number of new welfare programmes, all part of our response to our research on RAF veterans or the assessed needs of the serving RAF community. We have also built on the success in our fundraising of the past couple of years to increase our effort in a number of areas; this will ensure that we can continue to fund further new welfare programmes in the near future to address a wider range of needs, particularly amongst the elderly and those still serving.

As a general welfare charity, we find ourselves increasingly working with others collaboratively. Our casework has always been undertaken for us by others, such as SSAFA and Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA), but we are now finding that more of our delivery of welfare services can best be done by working with

specialist charities. New programmes have been started with Anxiety UK and Community Network to add to more longstanding work with others such as CAB, Relate and 4Children. These are intended to address old age issues such as social isolation and dementia, as well as depression amongst all ages and the enduring pressures on the families of the RAF, which remains on sustained long-term overseas operations.

Finally, we continue to develop the assessment of our work to provide the evidence of the impact we are having on beneficiaries' lives. We know that we must increasingly be able to demonstrate to generous supporters that we are putting their money to the best possible use.

**Air Marshal Chris Nickols**  
Controller, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund



## FAREWELL TO A DARING DAMBUSTER

**LES MUNRO, 1919–2015**

Squadron Leader Les Munro was the last surviving Dambusters pilot. Les joined an elite group from 617 Squadron who carried out a series of successful raids using “bouncing bombs” against German dams.

Last year Les raised an incredible £85,000 through the sale of his medals and logbooks to help maintain the Bomber Command Memorial in perpetuity as a tribute to his comrades during the war.

He said at the time: “I am content that I have achieved my goal of doing all I can to ensure that the men of Bomber Command who lost their lives during the Second World War will be remembered with pride for generations to come.”

His medals, which were bought by Lord Ashcroft, KCMG PC, are now on display at the Museum of Transport and Technology in his native New Zealand.

We were contacted by countless people from around the world who wanted to show Les their appreciation, so we launched an online Book of Gratitude in which more than 700 people from more than 50 countries, including Azerbaijan and Venezuela, left messages.

Sadly Les passed away before he received the book but his son Graeme said: “We were overwhelmed when we read the hundreds of messages to my father from people all over the world. He wasn't a man who liked fuss and attention but I know he would have been really touched by all the tributes.”



Corporal Martyn West  
with daughter Olivia



## Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

For more information on how the RAF Benevolent Fund can help you or a family member, or to make a donation, visit [www.rafbf.org](http://www.rafbf.org)

Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund,  
67 Portland Place, London, W1B 1AR

Helpline **0800 169 2942** Email **[info@rafbf.org.uk](mailto:info@rafbf.org.uk)**