



Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund



Impact Report

2024

About us

For more than 105 years, the RAF Benevolent Fund has been supporting the RAF Family. We are a key partner in the Royal Air Force's mission to look after its people during and after service, ensuring that this service is valued, recognised, and people are supported even when uniforms are eventually shed.

We are a national charity with international reach, delivering emotional, financial and practical support wherever and whenever it is needed. In 2024, recognising increasingly challenging times, our vital services and support continued to help those serving, families, veterans, and the bereaved, in 30 other countries. More than **64,000** people benefitted from the charity's work.

Our values

Our values guide how we work, grow, and support one another and, ensure that what we aim to achieve is firmly aligned with who we are.

Empathetic

We listen and seek to understand, standing with the RAF Family.

People-focused

We put people at the heart of everything we do, with tailored support.

Responsive

We do what we say we will and use evidence and insight to adapt to changing needs.

Inclusive

We work hard to ensure everyone feels valued and supported, and make ourselves accessible.

Innovative

We are forward-leaning and encourage new ideas and approaches to remain relevant.

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Welcome from HRH The Duke of Kent



As we look back on 2024, we reflect on a year of commemoration, gratitude, and renewed commitment to the RAF Family. It was a year that reminded us not only of the enduring legacy of service but also of the evolving needs of those who continue to serve, and those who have served before them. The RAF Benevolent Fund continues to serve as a pillar of strength for so many. Its work today is as relevant and necessary as it was at its founding more than a century ago.

This year marked the centenary of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, an important milestone that celebrated 100 years of dedicated service from the RAF's volunteer reserves. Their contributions, often carried out alongside civilian careers and family life, stand as a testament to the spirit of duty, adaptability, and resilience that has long defined the Royal Air Force. Their example reinforces why it is so important that we, as a nation, continue to support those who stand for us.

June 2024 brought the 80th anniversary of D-Day, a solemn and stirring moment in our national consciousness. The commemorations reminded us of the extraordinary courage of those who took part in that pivotal operation and the immense sacrifices they made. As we honoured their memory, we also reflected on the RAF Benevolent Fund's origins decades before D-Day, born in a time of war. Then, as now, the Fund remains a lifeline for members of the RAF Family in need.

As President of the RAF Benevolent Fund since 1969, I have been privileged to witness the organisation's evolution in response to the changing nature of military service and the modern challenges faced by RAF personnel and veterans. In June, I attended the Fund's Council (Advisory) meeting, where I learned more about their mental health support, initiatives to improve independence

and increase access to welfare services across the country. I was particularly interested in how the Fund's welfare programmes are reaching those who are often overlooked, including young children coping with the loss of a parent, elderly veterans struggling with mobility or isolation, and families facing financial hardship.

In October, I had the honour of attending a veterans' event at the RAF Museum. There, I met members of the Fund's outreach team and heard directly from veterans, partners, and carers whose lives have been transformed by the Fund's support. Many shared stories of overcoming loneliness, regaining independence, and rebuilding their confidence. It was a humbling experience that reinforced the Fund's role in helping individuals and families not only survive but thrive.

As we look to the future, we must continue to honour the legacy of those who came before us while ensuring that today's RAF personnel, veterans, the bereaved and families receive the care and support they need and deserve. I remain deeply proud of the RAF Benevolent Fund's work, and I offer my heartfelt thanks to the staff, volunteers, partners, and donors who make it possible. Together, we reaffirm our commitment: no member of the RAF Family should face adversity alone.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Duke of Kent'.

HRH The Duke of Kent

KG GCMG GCVO CD

President, RAF Benevolent Fund

Supporting the RAF Family through 2024

2024 was another year of high demand and high impact. As the needs of the RAF Family continued to evolve, we remained focused on delivering support that is personal, practical and lasting – reaching tens of thousands of people and adapting our services to meet the holistic picture of their lives.

In 2024, we were once again busy responding to the needs of the RAF Family. Every day, people came to us for help – and we were there to listen, understand and support in ways that made a difference. The demands on our services remained high, and our focus was on delivering support that is meaningful, lasting and tailored to each individual. We continued to fulfil our role as the trusted safety net for the RAF Family, standing by those who serve, those who have served, and their families.

We supported 64,876 people around the world this year, including serving personnel, veterans, their families and the bereaved. Whether they served recently or decades ago, for many years or just one day, our promise remains the same: one day of service, a lifetime of support.

Our wellbeing services continue to grow, complementing our traditional help with financial grants, housing and independent living.

As ever, our work is guided by the needs of the people we support. From advocacy and benefits advice – helping around 400

households access nearly £2M in previously unclaimed benefits – to practical and emotional assistance during difficult times, we aim to give tailored support reflecting the whole picture of a person's life. With 91% of beneficiaries telling us the Fund had improved their overall quality of life, we are proud that so many continue to place their trust in us. Behind every number is a person, a story, and a moment when the RAF Benevolent Fund has made a difference.

We are committed to making sure the Fund remains resilient, well-governed and firmly focused on its mission. We launched a new phase of research to ensure our services remain relevant and responsive in a changing world. This work builds on similar efforts in the past and will guide the way we plan, deliver and prioritise support in the years ahead.

We are proud of the organisation's response in another busy year and grateful to all who helped make it possible. Thank you to all our supporters, donors and volunteers. Your commitment enables us to continue being there for the RAF Family whenever we are needed.



Richard Daniel,
Chair of Trustees



**Air Vice-Marshal
Chris Elliot,**
Chief Executive

Our strategy

Our work goes beyond responding in the moment. From the first day in uniform, throughout service, the transition to civilian life, and into retirement and old age, we walk alongside the RAF Family every step of the way. We have a responsibility to ensure that those who serve, those who have served, their families and the bereaved never face life's challenges alone.

For over a century, through war and peace, hardship and change, the Fund has been a constant source of support. In 2024, we were able to engage where and when it was needed, quickly and compassionately, responding to the many thousands of requests for our help. Many were due to financial difficulty – families struggling to cope with loss or illness, and veterans finding it difficult to navigate the challenges of age, injury, or isolation. We helped to keep roofs over heads, supported children through their own challenging journeys, offered respite to carers, and ensured that no one had to face trauma or grief alone.

As people and families moved from service to civilian life, we were a bridge – in retirement and beyond, we remained a friend ready to respond when needed. That continuity, the knowledge that the Fund walks with you every step of the journey, is a source of immense comfort, and a powerful contributor to long-term wellbeing.

During 2024, we continued to enhance the way we deliver our services and found new ways to address the increasing complexity in need. Our aim, as always, is to ensure we provide life-changing support to people whenever they need it and for however long they need it.

Our long-term, personalised approach ensures beneficiaries receive the right help as life changes, building enduring relationships based on trust and responsive care. We are committed to supporting veterans, serving personnel, families, and the bereaved with holistic assistance, whenever and however it's needed.

We previously saw a four year period where external factors such as the cost of living crisis, high fuel costs, demographic shifts within the RAF Family, and broader societal trends have all impacted significantly on demand for our services. However, we have not seen the same scale in overall demand that we met in 2023 and that we expected in 2024. Across the UK and the charitable sector, financial conditions have begun to improve, with easing cost-of-living pressures contributing to a more representative level of need and demand across the RAF Family.



The priorities that guide our work

Our strategy has guided us for three years and, in 2024, our five key priorities enabled us to focus on increasing awareness and delivering greater impact for our beneficiaries.

Providing more tailored, hands-on support to the RAF Family

- We supported **64,876** members of the RAF Family in 2024, offering timely, compassionate and tailored help.
- Our team provided an invaluable first point of contact for those approaching the Fund. Their personalised, empathetic and timely responses delivered immediate solutions and support. They also started the pathway for those who needed a comprehensive solution where cases were complex and responded to multiple needs.

Increasing our fundraising income

- Fundraising efforts generated **£16.2M** in 2024 – a **15% increase** on the previous year – with growth in both legacy and non-legacy income streams.
- Our community of regular givers grew by **17%**, while our Trusts and Foundations programme provided a strong foundation for future support.

Strengthening our community engagement

- Our outreach team of Community Engagement Workers (CEWs) give us a vital presence in local communities. As a result, we were able to reach more of the RAF Family who were not accessing any form of support; **60%** of these beneficiaries had never previously been in contact with the Fund, including many with caring responsibilities and those experiencing memory loss.
- With a **112%** increase in active volunteers, we strengthened our local presence and ran initiatives like Dementia Reminiscence Groups, which supported **424** veterans and carers in 2024.

Placing a greater emphasis on insight, impact and innovation

- We improved the way we collect and collate beneficiary data, drawing on a wider range of sources to ensure a more accurate picture of our impact across the RAF Family.
- A new phase of our 'Meeting the Needs' research began, helping us plan for the future and ensure our services evolve with the changing RAF Family.

Developing greater collaboration and partnership working

- We deepened our collaboration with the RAF and charity sector, engaging with RAF stations, supporting Cobseo initiatives, and giving evidence in Parliament to advocate for the RAF Family.
- We were delighted to assume responsibility for all Alexander Duckham Memorial Schools Trust (ADMST) grant-making, providing educational grants to the children of RAF personnel, past and present, and helping to ensure access to quality schooling and educational opportunities.

Our support in numbers

We supported

32,587 serving personnel and their families with community activities and events

19,025 serving personnel and their families with individual support



3,964 veterans, their families and the bereaved with community activities and events

9,300 veterans, their families and the bereaved with individual support

We spent **£15.1M** to support a total **64,876** members of the RAF Family

Note: This year's total reflects a change in methodology, incorporating a broader range of support types. As a result, figures may not be directly comparable with those reported in previous years.



Our welfare goals

We aim to deliver meaningful, life-improving welfare support that is tailored to individual needs across the RAF Family. Our welfare strategy is guided by research, underpinned by impact frameworks, and measured through evaluation and outcomes.

Our four welfare goals guide our work and are discussed in the following pages demonstrating their impact. They do however often overlap with each other: beneficiary personal circumstances and needs are often varied and complex and rarely present as a single or straightforward issue. As we provide tailored, hands-on support, we routinely provide assistance that has elements of all of our welfare goals.

Delivering on welfare goals: adapting over time

Our welfare goals shape the outcomes we aim for, but what matters most is meeting each person's needs as they change throughout life. Luke's story below is a perfect example of how our help adapts to support the RAF Family in different ways, at different times.

Luke's story

Luke Delahunty joined the RAF Regiment in 1990 but at age 24, a life-changing motorcycle accident left him permanently paralysed. We supported him as he transitioned to civilian life, providing grants for home furnishings, a laptop, and an IT course to help him build a new future.

Now 53, Luke still connects with the Fund. He attends local veteran meet-ups organised by our Community Engagement Workers and, in 2024, enjoyed a much-needed break in Shropshire with the Disabled Holiday Trust. Luke's story shows how our support evolves in line with each person's journey, offering care that's flexible, personal, and long-lasting.



**Scan here to read
Luke's full story.**



Improved access to personalised support



We recognise the importance of ensuring that every member of the RAF Family can receive personalised support from us efficiently. We aim to offer proactive, personalised support, taking full ownership of each person's support journey – listening, guiding, and tailoring services to their specific circumstances. By simplifying our pathways and making access easier, we want to ensure no one falls through the cracks. We also increased our engagement with the serving community so that they can better understand our services and support, because we believe that learning of the Fund's presence starts on joining the RAF and not just when people need our help.

Here when they reach out

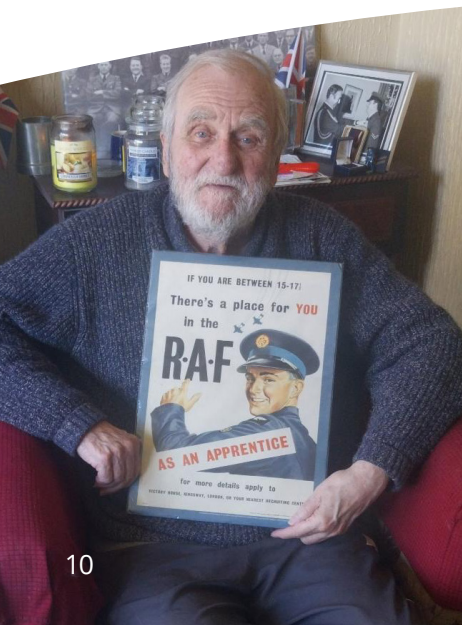
Our on-site, dedicated enquiry team was the first port of call for **7,268** members of the RAF Family, offering a kind and focused response to each person when they initially reached out. More people told us their experience of getting in touch was 'easy' or 'very easy,' and **73%** said they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the way their enquiry was handled.

Stronger caseworking

Our professional and in-house caseworking teams, working in many areas across the UK, supported beneficiaries facing multiple and complex issues – such as homelessness, debt, or mental health needs. In 2024, **66%** of all casework was handled directly by the Fund, a **50%** increase on 2023. **98%** of people said they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the support provided by their caseworker.

Tailored help that makes a difference

We know that no two people are the same, and our holistic approach means we listen to the whole story before building support around what really matters. In 2024, **over 500 enquiries** became fully managed cases, and **78%** of enquiries progressed into support – a significant increase on 2023. By joining up our enquiry and casework teams, we've made the whole journey simpler, faster, and more personal.



// The Fund has supported me in so many ways."

RAF veteran Geoff Stevens has faced some tough times, from being medically discharged as a result of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, to dealing with the loss of his wife in 2024. Geoff has received a range of support from us over the years, from grants for garden and domestic maintenance, to a stairlift and help towards his wife's funeral expenses. Geoff was also supported by our benefits advice team when there was some uncertainty around his military pension arrangement and received a backdated sum of £5,500 for overpayment in council tax.



// The therapy provided a great insight into how we could help our son and give him what he needs and deserves."

The Osling family's story

We helped the Osling family with a financial grant towards occupational therapy for their son Nye, resulting in his diagnosis of autism, ADHD and Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD).

The RAF has always been a huge part of the Osling family's lives – former Chief Technician Matthew served for 26 years before leaving in July 2024, and his wife Laura works at RAF Brize Norton, specialising in mechanical transport for a private company.

Despite being aware of the Fund from their time on station, Laura and Matthew never considered they would require support. However, that changed once their son, Anuerin (known as Nye), started nursery.

Laura said: "When Nye started nursery, he had a lot of violent outbursts, with no explanation of their causes. I'd get pulled into nursery every day and would have to fill out at least ten incident forms every time I went. We didn't know what was wrong, we couldn't figure out the trigger."

Laura did some research and came across information on SPD – a condition in which multisensory input is not adequately

processed to provide appropriate responses to the demands of the environment.

Laura spoke with a health visitor, who advised that Nye would require occupational therapy. However, occupational therapy for SPD was not available on the NHS.

"It was a minefield," said Laura, adding: "I didn't know where to begin and it was all so expensive. I spoke with a friend of mine in the RAF and he suggested contacting the Fund for help, which I did, and was awarded a grant to cover the cost of an occupational therapist to do a full assessment."

After an in-depth assessment, Nye was diagnosed with autism, ADHD and SPD. Laura said: "It was such a relief having some answers. The occupational therapist provided us with a full report with explanations for Nye's behaviour and tools to help us manage it together. The grant also funded additional sessions with Nye. The therapy provided a great insight into how we could help our son and give him what he needs and deserves."

Improved quality of living

Our support is designed to help individuals and families live with dignity, security, and comfort. We step in quickly providing help in times of financial hardship, emotional challenge, and crisis. This includes financial assistance, housing support, and help with essential living costs. Our goal is to reduce hardship and create stability in people's lives - whether that's through grants for home adaptations, mobility aids, or assistance in managing household expenses - ensuring beneficiaries can live safely and with confidence.

Whatever the challenge, we are here to help improve quality of living for members of the RAF Family. Often the relationship between the Fund and the beneficiary lasts for many years, adapting to their changing needs and helping them live with greater comfort, independence, and peace of mind.

Practical support when it's needed most

Our support covers urgent needs like home repairs, accommodation, travel, and legal advice, helping people overcome hardship and regain stability. In 2024, we provided direct assistance to beneficiaries across the world, including those living in Fund housing at affordable rents. **94%** of those receiving home adaptation grants reported satisfaction with their living conditions.

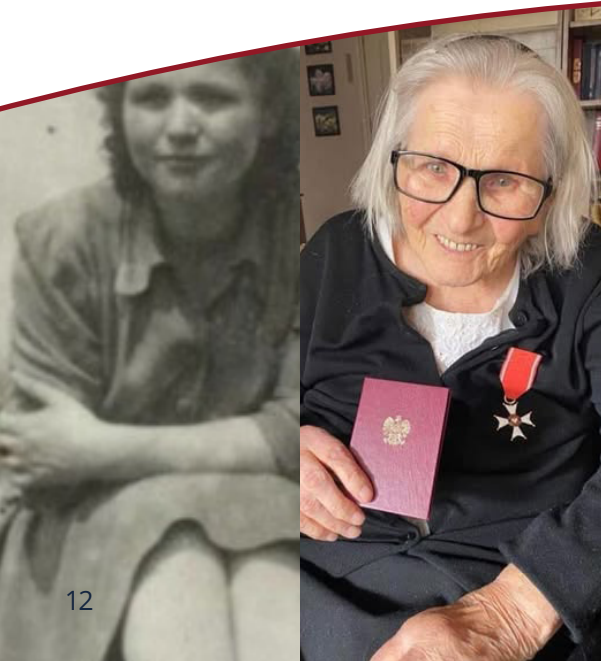
Advocacy that changes lives

In 2024, our Advocacy Team supported **108** beneficiaries, often in highly complex, overlapping legal situations. From mental capacity and safeguarding cases, to Court of Protection support, the team helped unlock around **£743,000** in financial gains for vulnerable members of the RAF Family. This service ensures no one faces the system alone and is vital to restoring dignity, rights, and long-term security.

Helping beneficiaries

access their full entitlements

Our Benefits and Advice Team helped **over 1,200** people with benefits advice, ultimately helping around **400** households uncover nearly **£2M** in unclaimed benefits in 2024. Through expert guidance and hands-on support, we helped people navigate complex claims and gain the financial support they deserve. This work improves not just income, but also beneficiaries' confidence, independence, and overall wellbeing.



Władysława Kondracka joined the Women's Auxiliary Airforce in 1943 and was based in Hucknall near Nottingham, providing ground support. Now aged 100 and living in Poland, Władysława is supported with financial assistance, enabling her son to hire a carer and pay for general day-to-day items, particularly in the cost-of-living crisis.



Scan here to read Władysława's incredible life story of exile to Siberia as a child and her journey to freedom.

The Sinclair family's story

Following his daughter's rare medical diagnosis as a baby, RAF Reservist Sergeant Neil Sinclair reached out to us for financial support towards specialist mobility equipment.

On 13 July 2017, life for Sergeant Neil Sinclair and his family changed forever. It was the date his ten-month-old daughter, Grace, was diagnosed with muscle deteriorating condition Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA).

"That day will be ingrained into my memory forever," said Neil. "The doctors gave Grace a 20% chance of living to the age of one, and a 5% chance of reaching two."

However, seven years later, Grace has defied the odds and enjoys life like an average seven-year-old – she loves Frozen, watching YouTube and going to school.

Neil, who is now a reservist at RAF Cosford, said: "Grace is doing well now, but life has been challenging. In 2018, Grace spent over 120 days in hospital. She has been in intensive care countless times, including from a common cold and COVID-19.

"We were struggling to get specialist equipment for Grace which she wasn't entitled to on the NHS until she reached the age of ten. Equipment for disabled children is so expensive – we didn't know what to do. I spoke to the welfare team at RAF Cosford, where I was based, and they suggested I contact the RAF Benevolent Fund."

We arranged for an occupational therapist to assess what equipment Grace needed, and the family was awarded with grants for an electric wheelchair, a specialist bed and an adapted car seat.

Neil said: "The chair was fully adapted to Grace's needs – it gives her the physical support she requires and enables her to sit up nice and straight. She can now get out and about, it's given her the freedom she didn't have before. She blasts through the house and garden in her chair!

"Don't get me wrong, it's been a hard few years, but the Fund has enabled us to have a normal life. Well, as normal as it can be. She

goes to a special educational needs (SEN) school and uses the chair there. She has her independence."

We also provided some financial assistance towards the family's wheelchair accessible vehicle, which allows them to spend quality time together outside of the house. "The vehicle has enabled us to function as a family – we have the freedom to go to places without constant upheaval. We can go shopping and to the park, and Grace can speed off and do her own thing too. The support has been life-changing."



“It's been a hard few years, but the Fund has enabled us to have a normal life.”

Increased independence

Independence is deeply personal, and for many members of the RAF Family, being able to remain independent and live life on their terms makes all the difference. Through personalised interventions, we enabled RAF Family members to deal with the challenges of disability, mobility, injury, and leaving the service, by providing them with the confidence, dignity, and comfort to live well and independently.

Mobility, comfort, and confidence at home

From home adaptations to personalised mobility aids, we helped people live more safely and comfortably in familiar surroundings. In 2024, **1,990** beneficiaries had one of our tailored mobility solutions, with **92%** using their equipment daily and **80%** saying their needs were fully or mostly met, giving them the confidence to move freely and live more independently.

Housing that enables independent living

Our Housing Trust supported **357** people in **196** adapted homes, offering stability and dignity for those leaving service with complex needs. With **100%** reporting an improved quality of living and **96%** satisfaction with the service, our Housing Trust provided a vital foundation for long-term independence and security.

A personal path to independence

Whether through a grant for a stairlift, a Group Friendship Break, or long-term supported housing, every intervention is part of a personalised path to independence. We adapt as our beneficiaries' needs change, offering practical, compassionate support that enables them to live well, safely, and with greater control over their daily lives.

// The scooter gave Bill his independence back."

Helen Moir was married to her husband Bill, a National Service RAF veteran, for over 30 years. Before his passing earlier this year, we were there to support him with his mobility issues, funding an Electric Powered Vehicle to help get him outdoors and have some independence. We also supported both Helen and Bill with recliner armchairs that helped the couple with their mobility and made them more comfortable.



Neil's story

After a serious car accident ended Neil Fellingham's RAF career and left him with a permanent leg injury, we funded an e-bike to help with his rehabilitation, giving him a new lease of life.

Former Senior Aircraftman Technician Neil Fellingham joined the RAF in 2010 and served for 12 and a half years as a Weapons Technician. Neil loved his military career, but sadly it was cut short when he was run over by a car he was repairing, resulting in a broken leg. Neil needed surgery to remove a neuroma and since then has been left with limited mobility and diagnosed with complex regional pain syndrome. Neil said: "Unfortunately it now looks like my left leg is dying and I have requested to amputate. My left leg has half the bone density of my right leg and it's not going to get better."

After Neil reached out to us for support, we stepped in to help with funding for a pedal

assist e-bike. Neil said: "I've always loved riding my bike and found that I couldn't do it anymore; I'd lost cycling which was so important to me, and I felt so low.

"The new e-bike is amazing because my right leg is doing all of the hard work. I feel incredibly fortunate to have received support."

Throughout Neil's recovery, his doctors encouraged him to swim and cycle to improve his physical and mental health. Neil said: "The bike has enabled me to do that – I feel so much better in myself when I've been on it."

"I know the support from the Fund will always be there for me in my journey ahead, and it's a massive relief. I've recently requested a day wheelchair and know for any of my future needs I can contact them for support."

// The new e-bike is amazing because my right leg is doing all of the hard work. I feel incredibly fortunate to have received support."



Enhanced wellbeing

We recognise that wellbeing goes beyond financial security; it includes emotional support, and practical assistance. We gave support in its most immediate form, while also building longer-term resilience through mental wellbeing programmes and counselling. Recognising that every person's wellbeing is intertwined with the wellbeing of their family, our support for children and young people, relationship support, and family respite breaks, provided greater family resilience and the stronger communities that are the cornerstone of the RAF Family.

We are committed to enhancing wellbeing for every generation of the RAF Family, from those currently serving to those in retirement. In 2024, we provided timely, meaningful support that responded to immediate needs while building resilience through emotional, social, and family-focused services.

Supporting children, young people, and families

Our Airplay youth support programme, now in its 15th year, helped RAF children settle into new homes, with **92%** saying it helped them make friends and **96%** saying it eased relocation stress. Demand for mental wellbeing support for young people rose, and **82%** reported an improvement in emotional wellbeing after accessing our services. Through BenPlay and BenParenting, we empowered RAF units to support early years development, especially for families with young children with SEND and funding will expand in 2025.

Mental health and emotional support

We supported over **2,000** individuals through our Listening and Counselling Service, maintaining high levels of access and satisfaction. Our free Headspace app membership received a **98%** satisfaction rating, highlighting the positive impact of mindfulness support. Relationship counselling also remained vital, with **80%** of families reporting improved family relationships after support.



“The Fund makes you feel like you never have to deal with anything alone.”

Toby Harris worked in the RAF Police as a Police Intelligence Analyst. He reached out to our welfare team after struggling with his mental health and feeling isolated. He was signed up to our Listening and Counselling Service which helped him process his emotions and gave him the tools to move forwards. Toby is now working in a new job which specialises in suicide prevention.

Sam's story

After a sports injury resulted in a dislocated leg and chronic pain, RAF doctor Sam May turned to us for mental health support to help her through her recovery.

In July 2023, Sam was injured whilst taking part in the pole-vault at the Inter-Service Athletics. She said: "I dislocated my knee, tore a lot of ligaments and had my leg reconstructed using tendons from my uninjured leg. This led to complications and more surgery in January 2024 which has resulted in chronic pain. It has not been a smooth recovery."

In 2024, Sam was made aware of our support for serving personnel and reached out for emotional support. She said: "I was struggling mentally; I'd gone from being an athlete and a doctor and feeling capable to not being able to do anything really. I was in a lot of pain and feeling very low. I realised I needed help, and the Fund set me up with counselling through their Listening and Counselling Service.

"It was really helpful; it was important to me to have a non-judgemental place to go and talk about things and share the load with someone who could help me figure out coping strategies."

Our support encouraged Sam to take part in the 2025 Invictus Games in Canada, where she competed in wheelchair basketball, swimming and skiing, bringing back two bronze medals.

// [The counselling] was really helpful; it was important to me to have a non-judgemental place to go and talk about things."



Respite and holiday breaks

Our holiday and respite programmes gave serving families and veterans the chance to rest and reconnect. Our partnership with Parkdean Resorts, providing breaks for serving families, received **100%** positive feedback on improving emotional wellbeing and, thanks to growing demand, even more breaks will be offered in 2025. We also provided adapted holiday accommodation through the Disabled Holiday Trust and supported **164** guests at our Bridlington cottage, The Folly.

Reconnection and community

Our Group Friendship Breaks created opportunities for veterans, spouses and their carers to spend time together in supportive, enjoyable environments. Led by our welfare teams, these group events helped reduce loneliness and build new bonds – key to lifelong wellbeing.



“The break gave us the time together as a family before my posting.”

With a looming posting in a remote location, Flight Lieutenant Duncan Walkey craved some quality time with his family and applied for a serving break. Thanks to our collaboration with Parkdean Resorts, the Walkey family were given a week-long break, enabling them to visit a relaxing beach-side resort and make some special memories.



“It’s good for the veterans to be able to get together and talk about their service days. It’s just nice to meet different people – and to have new friends to keep in touch with.”

Anne and Ian’s story

Our Group Friendship Breaks provided a source of comfort and a change of scenery for Anne Amstad and her husband Ian following a difficult couple of years.

On 13 July 2022, former RAF Sergeant Ian had a serious fall backwards down the stairs at home where he sustained haemorrhages leading to permanent brain damage. Following the accident, Ian was hospitalised for nine weeks and, in that same year, was diagnosed with dementia.

Ian was transferred to a nursing home for the next three months. Anne told us, “I just couldn’t bear for him to be there; I wanted him home, so he’s been home ever since and now I am his full-time carer. My daughter helps us too.”

Life as a full-time carer means Anne has little respite so, after being invited to attend our Group Friendship Groups in 2024 by their Community Engagement Worker (CEW), the couple jumped at the opportunity.

The five-day break was hosted at Littlecote House Hotel, Berkshire. The week was filled

with a varied itinerary of fun activities such as archery, shooting, dancing, quizzes and afternoon tea.

Anne said: “The Break was amazing; it’s a beautiful place and having the support from the Fund was wonderful and very enjoyable.

“It’s good for the veterans to be able to get together and talk about their service days. It’s just nice to meet different people – and to have new friends to keep in touch with.”

Anne and Ian both attend a monthly veterans’ coffee morning organised by our CEWs in Fareham, where they can socialise with other members of the RAF Family.

Anne concluded: “I cannot thank the Community Engagement team enough for their help during the break away. They are truly kind, caring people and I value their involvement in my life with Ian.

“It is so reassuring to know that should we need them; the RAF Benevolent Fund will be there to help us. Their support means a lot to me and for that I am so grateful.”

Supporting RAF stations and communities

Alongside our work supporting individuals, we also play a key role in strengthening the RAF Family as a whole. Our grants to RAF stations help to fill the gaps where public provision can't fully meet the wellbeing needs of serving personnel and their families. This funding supports social spaces, activities and local initiatives, both big and small, that improve everyday life on base and strengthen the RAF's promise to its people. In 2024, this vital work helped improve the quality of life for over **8,000** people across RAF units.

Henlow sensory room

We provided a small grant of £400, which has made a big difference for children and families at RAF Henlow.

The grant helped to redecorate an old storeroom within the community centre, re-purposing it into a new sensory room for children, especially those with SEN. This included new sensory toys and activities, but the main feature was a curved bubble wall with changing colours and to provide an 'under the water' theme.

Having already benefitted 20 partners of RAF personnel, and 30 children, the sensory room improves mental wellbeing of the children and families who use it. The bubbles and changing colours create different effects for all moods and situations, to enhance the specialist sensory focused environment. It also improves family relationships; parents and carers of young children with SEN feel more relaxed and at peace when they return to the family environment.

“What a lovely space; really calming and full of things to explore. Having somewhere for me and the little one to have a quiet moment is really appreciated.”

– Sam and daughter Millie, age 2



Working in partnership

Every year, we collaborate with other charities and organisations that share our dedication to supporting the RAF Family. Our grant giving includes support with employment, homelessness, and bereavement, filling the gaps that statutory services are unable to fill.

In 2024, we reviewed our grants programme to ensure it continued to meet the RAF Family's changing needs. Together, these partnerships help us do more for more people and, in 2024, we awarded grants to a range of charities and organisations, making a real difference to members of the RAF Family. Below are some of the grants we awarded:

Eastern European War Widows	£51K
Fares 4 Free	£5K
Forces Employment Charity	£55.7K
High Ground	£4.2K
Mission Motorsport	£5K
On Course Foundation	£3K
RAF Families Federation	£15K
RAF Widows	£34K
Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League CVP	£15K
SSAFA	£20.95K
The Veterans Charity	£5K
Veterans Outdoors	£5K
Waterloo Uncovered	£4K
Walking With The Wounded	£5K



We are proud to partner with the Forces Employment Charity to help RAF veterans build a new life after service. In 2024, we awarded a £55K grant to support their Ex-Forces Employment Programme, bringing our total support to **£160,000** since 2022.

This programme gives veterans the one-to-one help they need to move into civilian work, from writing CVs and preparing for interviews to finding the right training or career path. Last year, **646** RAF veterans took part, and many reported feeling more confident, stable, and ready for what comes next.

One of them was Andrew. After a successful RAF career and later roles in policing and private security, he was made redundant and struggling to find work. "Being made redundant in December was a real blow," he said. "But Emma from the Charity was brilliant – she found jobs that suited me, checked in regularly, and helped me prep for interviews. I'm now in a secure role where I can grow."

Together, we're helping veterans like Andrew take their next steps with confidence – and making sure no one is left behind after service.

Perspectives from our frontline teams

Our work helps individuals and communities across the UK, and it's our people who make this possible. These quotes from staff members highlight the passion and commitment they bring to supporting the RAF Family.



"Working closely with RAF stations to support their personnel and families is a privilege for me, having been brought up within the RAF Family. I can empathise with the issues facing the RAF Family today, ensuring they're aware of the support the Fund can offer them."

- **Liam Horsley**, Regional Business Support Executive – Central/North of England and Wales



"As a Community Engagement Worker, I have the privilege of meeting our beneficiaries face-to-face. It gives us the opportunity to build their connection to the Fund, alongside the opportunity to make meaningful connections with other veterans. The highlight of my role is being able to introduce those we support to new social opportunities. Seeing someone embrace our input even when life is challenging is extremely fulfilling."

- **Lisa Innes**, Community Engagement Worker - Hampshire



"The role of an Area Director is extremely varied and encompasses engagement, welfare and fundraising – all to improve the quality of life of serving personnel, their families and veterans in need of the Fund's support. I feel very privileged to be part of a team that has the ability to change the lives of those who are or have served their country and now need a helping hand."

- **Gavin Davey**, Area Director Scotland, Northern Ireland and North East England



"The best part of my job is watching the beneficiary journey take place in front of me. From them being anxious and not wanting to leave their home, to being unable to wait for the next event or meeting is just wonderful."

- **Ian Denton**, Community Engagement Worker - Cambridgeshire



"Every day I see the tangible difference our support makes to the RAF Family. Whether it's helping someone remain at home, assisting families with third party care home top-up fees, or enabling greater independence through mobility equipment, the welfare grants we provide go beyond finances; they restore dignity, comfort and quality of life and it is a real honour to be a part of that."

- **Claire Nelson**, Respite and Care Executive - London

Our year in engagement and fundraising



June

- 1 June:** Pilot project began to provide monthly 'drop-in sessions' at RAF station Welfare events.
- 7 June:** The 10th annual Inter-Livery Target Rifle Shoot, supporting the Fund.
- 11 June:** His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent visited our HQ in London to attend our annual Council Advisory Meeting.
- 19-21 June:** Serving personnel volunteered at Royal Ascot to raise money for tri-service charities and the Fund.
- 22 June:** London Biggin Hill Airport hosted the return of its Sunrise Challenge raising £7K for the Fund.
- 30 June:** Our annual Bomber Command Memorial Anniversary Service.

January

- 2 January:** Veteran and serving focused welfare engagement activities began for the year across the UK.
- 17 January:** Launch of our Lived Experience Network.
- 17 January:** Father and son duo took on an eight-day trek to Mount Kilimanjaro to fundraise.
- 20 January:** We joined RAF Winter Sports for their annual Alpine Challenge.

April

- 5 April:** We received 'Charity of the Year' status from the West London Aero Club.
- 25 April:** Our annual RAF Benevolent Fund Awards.



February

- 12 February:** Our 'Meeting the Needs' research project was launched.
- 5 February:** Five members of The April Fools' Club completed a four-day trek across the Falkland Islands to raise money for the Fund.

March

- 2 March:** Fundraiser Amy Briggs took part in the annual Gym 2 Gym half marathon in Cyprus, in memory of RAF Corporal Richard McLellan.



May

- 16 May:** To commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, GHQ Spirits launched a limited-edition Scottish spirits range to raise money for the Fund.
- 23 May:** An 80th anniversary D-Day special episode of the BBC's Bargain Hunt, featuring two of our ambassadors Mike Goody and Dan Pelling was broadcast.
- 28 May:** Airplay Youth Clubs participated in a 5K Colour Run to raise money.



July

- 6 July:** Caterham car manufacturers and the RAF teamed up to create a special-edition Seven 360R using parts of a Puma HC2 helicopter to raise money for the Fund and Mission Motorsport.





August

8 August: Annual Airplay Youth Forum at our head office.

29 August: Former RAF Regiment Gunner and Fund ambassador, Corporal Stuart Robinson MBE, represented Team GB at the Paris 2024 Paralympics Wheelchair Rugby.



October

1 October: RAF Valley teams went head-to-head for victory in a month-long virtual rowing challenge, raising over £1,000.

3 October: Beaujolais Run launch event with VIPs and RAF Aerobatic Team.

3 October: We spoke at the LGBTQ+ Network Conference to promote inclusivity of our support services.

4 October: A team of RAF serving personnel completed a challenging 80-mile trek to the Base Camp of Mount Everest.

10 October: Three RAF servicemen took on the 24-hour Pen-Y-Fan Challenge.

17 October: The Duke of Kent met with beneficiaries, staff and supporters of the Fund hosted by the RAF Museum in Hendon.

31 October: RAF Benson hosted a Scarecrow Trail event in support of the Fund.

September

6-7 September: International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight. We were the charity partner for the second year.

10 September: We began enduring support to RAF Odiham's 'Under the Disc' Project.

12 September: We agreed to undertake grant-making on behalf of Alexander Duckham Memorial Schools Trust.

16 September: Fundraiser Sean Allerton took part in a 24-hour wheelchair push at RAF Cranwell.

21 September: RAF Flying Badge Project went live with the RAF. Each badge sold raises £10 for the Fund.

November

11 November: We supported Remembrance events across four nations.

14 November: Five RAF Northolt personnel took on The Gherkin climbing challenge.

December

1 December: We ran Op Christmas with RAF stations, delivering Christmas lunches, activities, and hampers to veterans.

11 December: Our Carol Concert took place at St Clements Danes Church, the Central Church of the Royal Air Force.

5 December: Our Edinburgh Tri-Service Benevolent Fund Carol Service was held.

19 December: Our Carol Concert was held at Dorchester Abbey with RAF Benson.



Fundraising

The support we provide to the RAF Family, whether it's helping veterans find a new job, offering financial assistance, or simply being there when it's needed most, is only possible because of fundraising. Thank you to our donors, partners and fundraisers in 2024 for their generosity.

This dedication was on full display, from major events like The International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight, to face-to-face fundraising campaigns and the inspiring achievements we celebrated at the annual RAF Benevolent Fund Awards. To everyone who gave their time, energy and support including our fantastic volunteers – thank you. You are at the heart of everything we do.

Corporate partnerships

We are deeply grateful for the continued, generous support from our long-standing corporate partners throughout 2024. The support from MBDA helped to fund our Listening and Counselling Service and Group Friendship Breaks, with BAE Systems providing support for our mental health and financial assistance services for serving RAF personnel and their families.

We extend our sincere thanks to our strategic partner, Exolum, for their ongoing support of our Station Grants programme, and to VIVO Defence Services for funding towards social inclusion activities including two Group Friendship Breaks for retired veterans.

The International Ayr Show - Festival of Flight

In 2024, we joined South Ayrshire Council for the second year of our five-year partnership at The International Ayr Show – Festival of Flight in west Scotland. The two-day event featured an impressive air display programme and fun-filled family entertainment. Our team was on hand in the Festival Village to speak to the local community about our welfare support and fundraised at our merchandise stands. We gained **131** new regular givers across the weekend with the event raising nearly **£10,000**.

Face-to-face fundraising

We introduced face-to-face fundraising in 2024, successfully recruiting **1,490** new regular givers throughout the year. This has provided us with a valuable opportunity to connect with new people who may not be aware of the work we do but may now consider supporting us.

We collaborated with Family First Professionals to conduct door-to-door campaigns and managed an effective face-to-face campaign at the Ayr and Bournemouth air shows. After a successful first year, we are forecast to raise **£370,000** over the next five years.





Ten years of support from the Inter-Livery Target Rifle Shoot

In June 2024, Bisley Camp hosted the Inter-Livery Target Rifle Shoot event, bringing together 48 Liverymen from 16 City of London Livery Companies in support of the Fund.

With six shooting disciplines, from Target Rifle to Bell Target, and over 30 fantastic volunteers from the Royal Air Force Small Arms Association, the day was filled with friendly competition and team spirit.

Organised by Colin Sach, Past Master of a City Livery Company, the event saw the Tallow Chandlers team take home the prestigious Bakers Cup.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part, giving their time and energy to support the RAF Family.

RAF Brize Norton team's Mount Everest climb

In October 2024, a team of RAF serving personnel completed a challenging 80-mile trek to the Base Camp of Mount Everest to raise money for the Fund.

The team consisted of AS1 Rowan Martin of RAF Brize Norton Air Movements Squadron, and AS1 Jack Gooderham and Corporal Jimmy Nutton of RAF Brize Norton UK Mobile Air Movements Squadron.

The challenge involved 12 days of hiking rough terrain, ascending to altitudes of 5,364 metres.

Rowan started organising the event in April 2023, recruiting a team to join him on the challenge. He said: "I was interested in taking on the trek to Mount Everest Base Camp for

a few years and I wanted to take part to raise money for a worthy cause.

"The trek has been one of the hardest but most memorable challenges we have ever attempted. Trekking miles every day, from low to high altitudes and temperatures, it's certainly been a test of both physical and mental strength. We take great pride in knowing the money we have raised will be put to good use, helping those during difficult times."

The team raised over **£3,300**, resulting in Rowan winning the award for 'Fundraiser of the Year' at the 2025 RAF Benevolent Fund Awards.





Former RAF Policeman gives back by running Macclesfield Half Marathon

In October 2024, fundraiser Toby Harris – whose beneficiary journey we shared earlier in this report – took part in the Macclesfield Half Marathon to raise money for the Fund.

Toby served in the RAF Police between 2018 and 2023. He said: “I chose to fundraise for the RAF Benevolent Fund because they provided me with counselling support towards the end of my career when I was struggling with poor mental health, due to my experience whilst serving and home life. The support I received was amazing.”

“ I signed up to the event to raise money as my way of giving back. I was in a really dark place and the Fund kept my head above water for a good few months. The best thing about running the marathon was the sense of achievement I felt completing the race.”

Join us in supporting the RAF Family

There are many ways to support the RAF Family and we would love to help you find the one that's right for you.

To learn more about our fundraising and what we do with the funds raised, you can read our Annual Reports at rafbf.org/publications

Donate

If you're interested in making a financial donation, whether through a regular gift, a major donation, leaving a gift in your Will, or exploring a corporate partnership, please reach out to us at fundraise@rafbf.org.uk or visit rafbf.org/get-involved.

Volunteer

If you'd like to volunteer your time and skills to support the RAF Family, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Contact us at volunteering@rafbf.org.uk or learn more at rafbf.org/volunteer.



Thank you for being part of our mission. Together, we can make sure no one in the RAF Family is left behind.

Thank you to our donors

We are immensely grateful to our donors, a few of whom are listed below. Your generosity has made a significant impact, and we cannot thank you enough.

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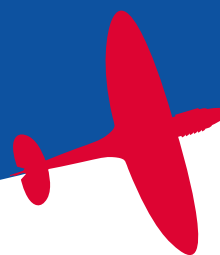
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