

# Sector Insight: UK Armed Forces Charities

Armed forces personnel, their dependents and their service to this country have seldom been the subject of such high levels of political, public and media interest. This report addresses some of the common myths and misconceptions surrounding the armed forces charity sector.

Sector Insight: UK Armed Forces Charities marks the first comprehensive insight into armed forces charities in the UK. The report includes: an overview of their objects and activities; in-depth analysis of their finances; a detailed look at their service provision and grant making; geographical comparison of specialist support needs and provision; examination of the current health and future challenges for the sector.

*'The publication of this report marks a significant step forward for the armed forces charities sector. For the first time, it will be possible for those working at all levels in this area to base their decisions upon an independent and credible source of information.'*

**Sir Andrew Ridgway, Director, Forces in Mind Trust and Chair of Cobseo**



# How many armed forces charities are there?

The report identified over 2,200 armed forces charities registered in England and Wales, with a combined income of over £870million. The infographic below shows the various categories of armed forces charities and the amount of income each contributes to the sector.

## UK Armed Forces Charities An overview and analysis

**2,237** armed forces charities registered in Great Britain  
1,818 England & Wales  
419 Scotland

**>£872** million total income 2012  
£807 million England & Wales  
£65 million Scotland

**1,495** charities that cater for the needs of Service and ex-Service personnel and their families!  
**£716 million** (82% of the total)  
1,232 England & Wales (£660 million)  
+ 263 Scotland (£57 million)

**242** armed forces heritage organisations  
**£125 million** (14% of the total)  
222 England & Wales (£118 million) + 20 Scotland (£7 million)

**500** cadet forces units and organisations  
**£30 million** (3% of the total)  
364 England & Wales (£29 million) + 136 Scotland (£1 million)

**278** welfare charities – England & Wales only  
**£479 million** (55% of the total)

**283** Service funds – England & Wales only  
**£123 million** (14% of the total)

**65** mixed-type charities – England & Wales only  
**£32 million** (4% of the total)

**82** associations – England & Wales only  
**£23 million** (3% of the total)

**515** association branches – England & Wales only  
**£3 million** (0% of the total)

**9** other – England & Wales only  
**£0.3 million** (0% of the total)

**205** association branches in Scotland  
**£2 million** (0% of the total)

**58** additional Scottish charities (unclassified)  
**£55 million** (5% of the total)

**136** armed forces museums  
**68 million** (8% of the total)

**17** heritage preservation trusts  
**£45 million** (5% of the total)

**89** other (such as memorials or historical societies)  
**£12 million** (1% of the total)

**9** umbrella bodies of the UK cadet forces  
**£22 million** (3% of the total)

**491** local or regional cadet forces charities  
**£8 million** (1% of the total)

For the full report An Overview of the UK's Armed Forces Charities, visit [www.armedforcescharities.org.uk](http://www.armedforcescharities.org.uk)

# Myths & truths

## about the sector

DSC's research investigated some common perceptions about the armed forces charity sector, finding most to be false. Popular myths include:

### *'There are too many armed forces charities'*

**Claims about there being too many charities are partly driven by a lack of understanding of the huge diversity of armed forces charities operating in the sector. Contrary to the common perception that the sector has undergone a large expansion in recent years, our research shows that it has actually contracted.**

### *'New entrants into the sector have created unwarranted competition and have taken income away from established charities'*

**New entrants into the sector are having a generally positive effect, creating new growth which benefits the sector as a whole.**

### *'There is little or no coordination in the sector'*

**The armed forces charity sector shows greater collaboration and cooperation than other charitable sub-sectors we examined. The benevolent grant-making process in particular is a highly coordinated and flexible in responding to the needs of beneficiaries, with the majority of casework routed through SSAFA or The Royal British Legion.**

## Methodology

- DSC maintains a comprehensive database of UK armed forces charities, which was developed as part of a twin strand research project with FiMT during 2013/2014.
- In addition to searching DSC's own database, systematic searches of CCEW, OSCR and CCNI databases and charities' websites were carried out.
- Although the report draws mostly on desk research, two surveys were also sent out to over 400 charities, which received a response rate of 22%. Although not representative, the survey findings are used to corroborate and refine findings and quoted selectively throughout the report.

## About the report

DSCs armed forces research is generously funded by Forces in Mind Trust.

The authors would like to thank all armed forces charities which provided invaluable information during the data-collection phase of the project.



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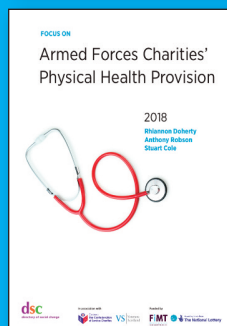
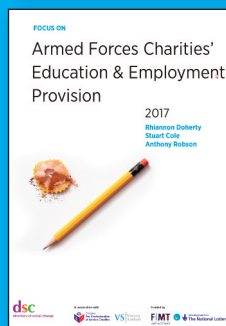
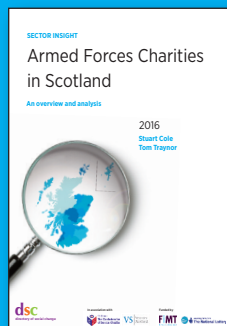
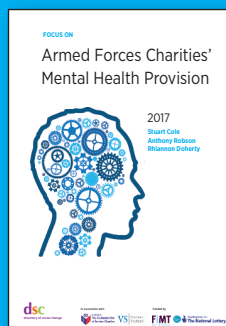
## About DSC

The Directory of Social Change (DSC) has a vision of an independent voluntary sector at the heart of social change.

We help independent charities, voluntary organisations and community groups to achieve their goals by:

- Providing practical tools that organisations and activists need, including publications, training courses, and conferences. and research
- Acting as a 'concerned citizen' in public policy debates, Leading campaigns and stimulating debate on key policy issues
- Carrying out research and providing information to influence policymakers

## Download other reports in the series



To download the reports and learn more about DSC armed forces charities project and other research, visit [www.dsc.org.uk/research](http://www.dsc.org.uk/research) or follow us on twitter: [@dsc\\_charity](https://twitter.com/dsc_charity) or [@forcescharities](https://twitter.com/forcescharities).

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