2026 IMPACT REPORT



CITY OF LONDON

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR

AZAD AYUB
PHILANTHROPY

ENABLED BY

Army Benevolent Fund

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LADY MAYOR

ALDERWOMAN DAME SUSAN LANGLEY, DBE

THE MANSION HOUSE, LONDON EC4N 8BH

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1 July 2026

It is with great pleasure that I can announce that, after modest expenses, this year's Big Curry Lunch raised over £400,000 - for the fourth year running. This takes the total sum raised over the last nineteen years of the Big Curry Lunch to over £4.6 million; a tremendous result for the City.

This feat would not have been possible without the generosity of so many sponsors and supporters, both corporate and individual, and that of the Livery Companies, Ward Clubs and City Clubs. Collectively, their support forms the backbone of the Lunch. Given the City's historic commitment to the Armed Forces of the Crown, I am delighted that the Lunch is such a success.

Members of our Armed Forces continue to distinguish themselves by their actions, their discipline and their bravery. In return, the nation owes them a debt of gratitude and one of responsibility. The three single service charities, the Army Benevolent Fund, the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, are the Big Curry Lunch Committee's conduit for helping veterans of His Majesty's Armed Forces into employment.

Up to £100,000 raised from this year's Lunch will provide financial support for veterans waiting to take part in the Warrior Programme; for the first time this year, we are going to support veterans' spouses and partners who need support as they try to cope with the pressures placed on them. Similarly, up to £100,000 will go to fund veterans through Lifeworks programmes; their sole focus is to provide training and encouragement in preparing veterans for job-seeking and interviews.

Both of these initiatives will enable our Nation's veterans transition into rewarding and stable employment in the civilian world. Both align with the 'Employment and Employability' strands in the City of London's strategy of 'A Better City For All'.

As the demand for support for our veterans and their families continues, our challenge is to make sure that we, as guardians of the City, give as much as we can to meet this need. We should encourage even more City businesses and our fellow Livery Companies and Ward Clubs to join us in supporting this worthy cause.

I hope you will feel able to offer your support to the twentieth Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch in April 2027 in Guildhall. Thank you so much for your support.

The Rt Hon The Lady Mayor of London
Alderwoman Dame Susan Langley DBE


















Exit

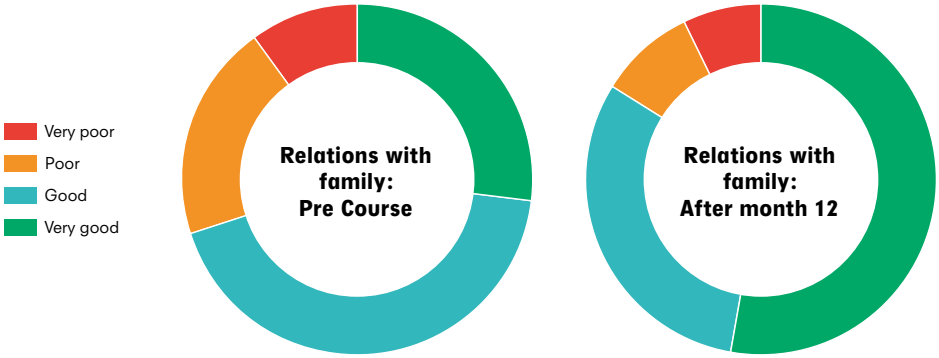


thewarriorprogramme

Founded in 2007, Warrior is a highly regarded, evidence-based service led by a team with extensive military experience. Its approach is non-clinical and accessible, creating a safe environment where participants develop practical strategies to manage mental health and emotional wellbeing.

We support veterans with severe and complex issues including anxiety, depression, PTSD symptoms, suicide risk, and unemployment. In the year to 31 March 2026, Warrior supported 130 veterans through the Foundation course.

The impact of the programme is significant. Individuals have improved resilience, mental health and life outcomes, with many progressing into employment, education and stronger family relationships.

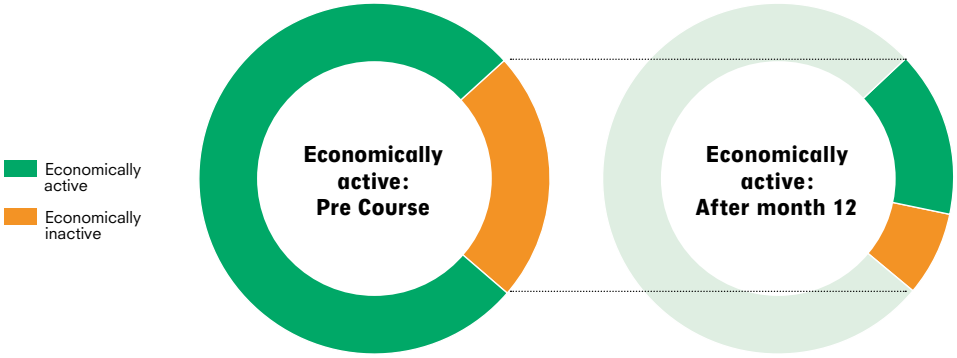


Relationships

Improvements in family relationships are a key indicator that individuals are taking action and addressing issues in their lives. The progress demonstrated underpins improvements in all areas of their lives and also has an important positive impact for those close to our veteran participants.

Activity Status

Of the veterans referred to Warrior, a quarter were not in work and not looking for work. After 12 months two thirds (67%) of those previously not in work are now economically active, either in working, training, education or volunteering. These individuals are the furthest from employment and, as a result of attending the Warrior Programme, are now making a positive contribution and creating a worthwhile life for themselves and their family.



"The 3 days on the Warrior Course have honestly meant more to me than I can put into words. I came in carrying a lot emotionally, and through this process I've been able to open up, face things I'd kept buried, and start making sense of my feelings in a healthier way. It's helped my mental health in a real, meaningful way and I can already feel a difference in myself."

The support from the Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch 2026 will support 40 veterans and/or their partners to undertake Warrior's lifechanging programmes.

LIFEWORKS



Lifeworks is an award-winning initiative which helps veterans who are furthest from employment take decisive next steps towards a new career.

It provides targeted, personalised support to get veterans into work. The charity adapts to individual circumstances, with a four day residential course followed by 12 months of further support. Within this period, 80% of participants gain access to employment, training or relevant volunteering.

During 2025, support from the Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch has led to over 400 out-of-work veterans to access free, in depth training in one of 17 locations all over the UK. Your support means they can focus on additional Armed Forces communities facing deprivation. In the last year, the charity has held courses in locations such as Gateshead, Swansea, Glasgow, Portsmouth, Colchester, and Coventry.

Neil served for 26 years in the Army, reaching the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2, with postings in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq. However, his career came to an end in 2019 because of changes to rules about length of service.

Neil says: "My military career was cut off in my 40s, while I was still in my prime. I had been so self-disciplined, so self-reliant, so professional. Then my life started unravelling. I had lost my pride in myself completely." Neil lost his job and his relationship, and became increasingly dependent on alcohol. But after being referred to Lifeworks, he says he found a new sense of purpose. "I feel I've achieved a lot on the Lifeworks course and my confidence has returned. I am undertaking my personal trainer qualifications and have already been offered employment in a local gym. I now know I am moving forward in my life."

Elizabeth served as a Royal Navy medic for 17 years, but had her career cut short when she was medically discharged. In addition, leaving the services in this way had placed her under greater financial pressure.

After a referral to Lifeworks, Elizabeth was able to gain the new skills and confidence she needed, and the charity's support began to lead to invitations to interview. A few months after attending Lifeworks, she gained a role with a leading construction and civil engineering company, which has built her confidence even further. She says "My ideas and work ethic are valued, and I was quickly made to feel part of the team. I cannot put into words how amazing the Lifeworks course was for me...(it) gave me the confidence I needed".

The yearlong Lifeworks programme is only available for free to veterans like Elizabeth and Neil, because of supporters like the Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch.

"I now know I am moving forward in my life."

Neil, Former Soldier

The 2026 Big Curry Lunch is supporting 65 veterans through Lifeworks programmes.

THE CO-CHAIRMAN'S ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE 2026 LUNCH



In reviewing the impact of the 2026 Big Curry Lunch, I would like to highlight three key aspects of our work.

Firstly, the Lunch plays a central role in communicating the role of the Armed Forces of the Crown to a wide City audience. The Lunch works to increase understanding of the difficulties faced by some veterans as they seek civilian employment after service.

Secondly, the funds raised are utilised to support individual veterans and their families to participate in highly targeted and personalised programmes, delivered by Lifeworks and the Warrior Programme.

Thirdly, the Lunch operates on a highly effective business model: for every £1 raised, more than 85p directly supports our Nation's veterans. This is made possible through the generosity of our sponsors, donors, in-kind suppliers, and the dedication of over 300 volunteers who give their time and expertise.

The Lady Mayor and I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of our hardworking Committee.

Planning has already begun for the twentieth Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch, which will take place in April 2027.

Michael Hockney
Co-Chairman and Founder,
The Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Livery Companies, Ward Clubs and City Clubs.

SUPPORTING ALL MEMBERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S ARMED FORCES

Army Benevolent Fund is a registered charity in England and Wales (1146420) and Scotland (SC039189) and registered as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (07974609).