



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Veterans Community Network

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31 March 2022 **Charity no
(if any)** 1191970

Set out on pages

1 to 9

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2022.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:  **Date:** 27/01/2023

Name: Alan Endersby

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):** ACA

Address: Streets S J Males Limited, Basepoint Business & Innovation Centre,
110 Butterfield, Luton LU2 8DL

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

None.

**Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the Period from 23 October 2020
to 31 March 2022**

Reference and Administration Details

Charity name:	Veterans Community Network
Registered Charity number:	1191970
Charity's principal address:	Union House 111, New Union Street, Coventry, CV1 2NT
Accountant & Independent Examiner	Streets Chartered Accountants

The Charity was constituted on 10 June 2020 and commenced its charitable activities on 23 October 2020. The trustees present their first Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the period from 23 October 2020 to 31 March 2022.

The trustees that have managed the Charity during the period are as follows:

Trustee Name	Position	Date of Appointment	Date of Resignation
Dr Gillian Le Page	Chair	10 June 2020	28 January 2022
	General Trustee	28 January 2022	On-going
John Hackett	Treasurer	10 June 2020	14 May 2022
Matthew Hodgetts-Tate	Secretary	10 June 2020	23 January 2022
Terry Baines	Chair	28 January 2022	22 April 2022

Subsequently Terry Baines and John Hackett resigned. The following trustees were appointed and continue to manage the Charity:

Keith Le Page (from the 5 May 2022)
Peter Sortwell (from the 5 May 2022)
Patricia Haslam (from the 7 July 2022)

Structure, Governance and Management

The Charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation under the Charity Commission “Foundation” model.

The Charity is managed by its trustees, which currently number four. The Service Director, Dr Gillian Le Page, deals with all operational matters relating to the delivery of peer mentoring services. The other trustees deal with administrative and financial matters according to their particular area of experience.

The other trustees have been recruited in order to provide the Charity with a broad mix of such experience.

Related Parties

Dr Gillian Le Page and one of the other trustees, Keith Le Page, are related parties by family connection. In the event of a conflict of interest arising because of this connection, the relevant decision will be taken solely by the independent trustees, Patricia Haslam and Peter Sortwell.

Objectives and Activities

Objectives

The objective of the Charity set out in its governing document is:

“To relieve the needs of and to promote the good health and wellbeing of ex-service personnel (HM Armed Forces) and reservists and their families living in Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, and Bedfordshire. In particular but not exclusively by providing them with help and assistance and by offering them a professionally supervised peer mentor led care co-ordination service to expert support providers for their benefit and in such other ways as the trustees consider fit.”

Summary of the Main Activities Undertaken for the Public Benefit

VCN began as a Community group, in November 2019. This group was a co-production group meaning that the beneficiaries of VCN were at the very heart of the design and development of VCN's services.

In this first period, VCN provided support to veterans who were experiencing barriers to engaging with treatment and support services including both statutory and third sector providers. Service delivery was totally dependent on the volunteer contribution and we were fortunate enough to be able to identify and train 5 peer mentors, all of whom had a military connection.

However, it became clear that to become sustainable, there was an urgent need to secure funding. Following a successful bid to the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Forces For Change Grant in partnership with both Milton Keynes and Bedford Councils, VCN delivered funded services in Milton Keynes and Bedford through the appointment of a Social Activities Co-ordinator.

VCN's co-production Veteran Peer Mentor (VPM) model 'bridges the gap' by directly targeting the barriers to engagement and retention in treatment/support. Our **AIM** is to be **A**spirational **I**nspirational and **M**otivational through VPM's lived experience of military life and skills to help them cope, adjust, and thrive in civilian life.

Armed Forces Covenant Trust Forces for Change Grant

Through an AFCT grant commencing in February 2021 for 12 months and volunteers, VCN have successfully delivered peer mentoring services in Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes supporting over two hundred service users through:

- Assertive outreach / identification of need / risk/onward referral
- MH First Aid
- Motivation to access treatment using self-help psychosocial interventions to raise awareness / prepare for treatment / remain engaged in the process.
- Treatment and support guides and navigators
- Care co-ordination by 'connecting' veterans not just signposting
- Advocacy to ensure a seamless service between partners
- Transport to appointments / post session decompression
- Social Inclusion

Achievements and Performance

The 12 month Social Activities Post has been very successful in achieving its objectives of connecting veterans who have become socially isolated, especially during the COVID Lock down period.

Tea and Banter sessions via Zoom were established twice a week for two hours although these often extend beyond that. Sometimes the sessions have a less formal structure including chatting, games, quizzes and a comprehensive programme of talks throughout the 11 months bringing in visiting speaker who are either veterans or work with veterans.

As COVID restrictions have eased, more activities have been face to face, but we have always been both reactive and responsive when things needed to change due to any relevant guidelines.

During the period, a face to face drop-in was established in Bedford at the North End club working man's club which also had a number of veteran members who have joined us. A monthly breakfast club (which is affiliated to the AFBC Network) has also been established at the same venue.

A summer garden party and two Christmas fairs were held in Bedford & Milton Keynes, with these events being used in part as fund raisers for VCN.

Individual Social Support including weekly calls and face to face support has been given to 113 Veterans and family members. These are new referrals with much of the support being on-going throughout the duration of the project.

An unexpected outcome was the emergence of Veteran Supporting Veteran. This evolved to allow veterans who were keen to get involved in supporting other veterans, but not wanting/or not ready to take on the full responsibility of being a veteran peer mentor.

The targets for the grant were:

	Target	Actual
Direct Beneficiaries	200	784
Indirect Beneficiaries	450	715

Despite the success of the Forces for Change Grant, VCN was not successful in securing further funding for this post. However, we have managed to continue to deliver the work through securing further funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust as briefly outlined below.

Armed Forces Covenant Trust (AFCT) Strengthening the Armed Forces Covenant

In November 2021, VCN once again partnered with Milton Keynes and Bedford Council which provided funds to engage a part time admin support worker for VCN.

Two key activities were identified through this grant which was to support the delivery of the NHS England First Aid Mental Health Training and to delivery a local Conference (May 2021)

Armed Forces Covenant Trust (AFCT) Veterans People, Places Pathways Grant (VPPP)

In the summer of 2021, the AFCT launched a new national pot of funding divided regionally across the UK.

The idea behind this grant was for a lead partner to select local projects to form a 'consortium' of delivery partners across the region focusing on providing safe places for veterans, partnership working and ensuring that services made sure they raised awareness of the issues facing veterans across all agencies through training and briefings.

VCN successfully applied to three areas:

South East (Buckinghamshire)

Eastern (Bedfordshire)

Midlands (Northamptonshire)

Quarter 1/22 was the mobilisation phase which principally focused on strengthening governance, preparing to directly employ staff, recruitment and selection phase and training and raising awareness of the new services with professionals.

By the end of March 2022 VCN had two part time self-employed members of staff and 1 x FTE staff member

Financial Review

Policy on Reserves

During the period the Charity has sought to build up reserves to provide a buffer against the risk of a future funding shortfall and had not adopted a policy on the level of retention of reserves. At the period end the Charity had accumulated unrestricted funds amounting to £18,938. Included in this sum was a Grant of £11,191 that was paid to the Charity for the delivery of the V PPP Program which commenced on 1 January 2022 and will end on 31 December 2023. However, staff were not in post until later in the year with the first salary being paid in April 2022 (outside of this reporting period).

The Grant will not be extended beyond the end date of the contract and VCN was able to use the monies as setting up costs. The work was undertaken by the Service Director who, as a Trustee, could not accept payment for this work. Instead, this money was moved into VCN's unrestricted funds in order to honour the two-year contract for staff members subsequently employed. These monies have been moved to Designated Funds to cover the salaries of staff beyond the life of the contract. This is for the direct benefit of VCN's beneficiaries as they will enjoy VCN's services for the full 24 months.

The balance of £7,747 was the total general unrestricted funds available at 31 March 2022.

Subsequently, the Charity has adopted the retention of reserves policy that the Charity intends to hold as a minimum one month's salary and contract costs as Designated Funds. The main purpose of this reserves policy is to fund shortfalls in income, when income does not reach expected levels or if a grant is not renewed and to enable continuity of staff employment in these circumstances.

Principal Source of Funding

The Charity's principal source of funding is grant income from support providers for the provision of peer mentoring services. The grant income is usually earned under fixed term contracts. At the end of the period end restricted funds amounted to £14,635 representing grant income received in advance.

Subsequently, one contract was terminated early for reasons beyond the control of the Charity and the residual grant income of £8,640 was repaid to the support provider.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Annual Report above.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's trustees.

Signature	
Trustee Name	Dr Gillian Le Page
Position	Service Director

Date: 26 January 2023

**Receipts and Payments Accounts for the Period from 23 October 2020
to 31 March 2022**

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts			
Grant Income	15,000	43,419	58,419
Training Course Income	750	370	1,120
Donations	6,784	15	6,799
	-	-	-
Total receipts	22,534	43,804	66,338
A3 Payments			
Cost of Goods Sold	-	919	919
Direct Expenses	373	214	587
Direct Wages	-	22,462	22,462
Advertising & Marketing	468	-	468
General Expenses	847	2,568	3,415
Insurance	302	-	302
IT Software and Consumables	421	249	670
Postage, Freight & Courier	11	14	25
Salaries	-	1,582	1,582
Staff Training	721	186	907
Subscriptions	301	623	924
Travel Costs	56	353	409
Rounding	95	-	95
	-	-	-
Total payments	3,596	29,169	32,765
Net of receipts/(payments)	18,938	14,635	33,573
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	18,938	14,635	33,573

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 March 2022

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	
B1 Cash funds	Cash at Bank	18,938	14,635	
		-	-	
		-	-	
	Total cash funds	18,938	14,635	
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	PAYE Creditor	Unrestricted Fund	343	19 April 2022
	Pension Creditor	Unrestricted Fund	101	19 April 2022
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one trustee on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
	<i>Dr Gillian Le Page</i>	Dr Gillian Le Page	26-January-23	