

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION AND HELP FOR HEROES

The following is a report given by Russell Thompson, Director Fundraising, to the Membership Council on 26th November 2009.

What is the difference between The Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes?

The Legion and Help for Heroes are separate Armed Forces charities. Help for Heroes is a fundraising and grant making organisation. It concentrates on raising funds for building projects.

The Legion is the first port of call for help for the entire Armed Forces' Family. We applaud Help for Heroes for helping the wounded from Iraq and Afghanistan and raising awareness of their needs.

We, however, are responsible for their welfare - today and for the rest of their lives.

Last year we spent more than a £1 million a week helping over 130,000 members of the Armed Forces' Family. We provided 10,000 Service personnel and recent veterans with experience of Iraq and Afghanistan operations with financial assistance. We represented one-third of all the appeals for higher compensation payments for injuries suffered in Afghanistan.

Our campaigning led to increased compensation awards which have placed an extra £7.5 million in the pockets of the most seriously injured. We helped rehabilitate the physically injured and to train and resettle others into civilian life. We provided direct support to service widows and other dependants. And, we provided more than £3.5 million grant support to other service charities - like Combat Stress which help those in need of specialist psychological care.

Can Legion Branches raise money for Help for Heroes?

We worked successfully with H4H on three national fundraising projects last year. Both charities benefited from the additional income generated and the Legion took every opportunity to raise public awareness of the extent of our welfare work.

We like to partner with other charities - particularly those in the same sector and especially on the delivery of welfare services to those most in need. We have a number of ambitious projects underway and we know, despite our best efforts, that we have yet to meet all our welfare targets.

Our relationship with Help for Heroes is continuing. Naturally, given our huge remit, we would want our members' branches to concentrate on raising funds for the Poppy Appeal. While, our constitution does not permit County and Branch formations to donate funds raised for the Legion to other charities, we are a major grant giving charity.