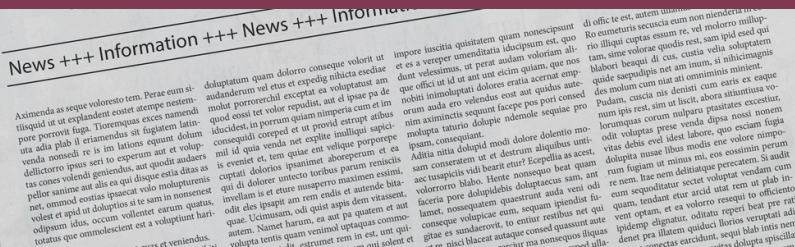


AUTUMN 2024

# NEWSLETTER



## EDITORIAL:

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Editorial - The Role of Charities in National Recovery
- Service Dogs UK Feature Article
- Telling Your Story Workshops
- Guest article from Trustee Dan Arnold
- Launch of New Book Clubs
- and much more

### Britain's Critical Condition: The Role of Charities in National Recovery

Britain today feels profoundly different from the Britain of ten years ago. Once there was a sense of stability, a nation moving steadily forward. If you had predicted a pandemic, national lockdowns, parties in the centre of government breaking lockdown rules, or a 50-day Prime Minister, people might have given you a puzzled look, perhaps even dismissed you with a touch of derision.

Yet here we are, and the country feels totally neglected. Boarded-up shops line once-bustling high streets, overgrown planters full of weeds sit untouched in front of shopping parades, and potholes scar our roads. If Britain were a person, what would these symptoms be telling us? And what about the nation's vital organs; health, education, social care, housing, defence, transport? They are in critical condition. Our healthcare system is buckling under pressure, struggles to see a GP, delayed cancer treatments and worsening national health, while our housing crisis leaves thousands without secure homes. National productivity remains alarmingly low, hindering economic growth and innovation.

continued on page 2



The government faces a monumental task to cure the nation of this deep-rooted deterioration. Our institutions need repair, and our society needs healing. But they cannot do it alone.

I have long complained about charities having to step in and plug the gaps created by state failures. Many in our sector feel this frustration; should it really be our responsibility to compensate for these shortfalls?



At The Ripple Pond, we act as a vital part of the nation's recovery system, a force multiplier in the healing process. We are effective, informed, agile, and deliver high-impact results at a low cost. Just as a patient recovering from illness needs the right care and support, the government must recognise that charities are essential in nursing the country back to health.

Charities are not just a supplement; they are part of the treatment plan, providing the long-term care needed to prevent further decline. If the government is serious about rehabilitating the nation, it must ensure that charities are central to the cure; hardwired into its plans, ambitions, and funding to ensure a full and lasting recovery.

But that frustration needs to be set aside because, whether we like it or not, charities have become an indispensable part of the nation's recovery plan. Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves, take note: charities will be essential in unlocking this country's future. They must be recognised as vital players in the recovery regime.

Look at how The Ripple Pond operates: We listen, identify needs, and build powerful partnerships. Our work supporting carers through programmes like Operation COURAGE enhances health and social outcomes not just for individuals but for entire families.

Our support for carers relieves pressure on the NHS, helps carers re-enter the workforce, and boosts the economy. It enables children in these families to build confidence and have a chance to thrive. We have an extraordinary model for tackling isolation, fostering inclusivity, and boosting overall wellbeing. The government must ensure that large and small charities are given a seat at the top table. We need to be part of the planning teams and even part of the "red teams"—those tasked with challenging and testing policy decisions before they're made. Charities should be hardwired into national plans, ambitions, and funding frameworks.

*Rodger Cartwright*  
Chief Executive Officer



## Midlands Op COURAGE Partnership

We are proud to be part of the Midlands Op COURAGE Partnership celebrated for its collaborative team working



# CHARITY FEATURE



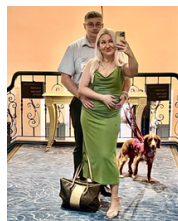
## One Member's Story...

'My husband was diagnosed with complex PTSD in 2019. Like many Members of The Ripple Pond, the effect of his condition has been hugely significant on us all.

He engaged with therapy after therapy which only seemed to do so much. Things seemed very dark and very desperate. He was incredibly isolated and we were all struggling.

We read about Service Dogs and the testimonials on their website looked amazing. We applied to the programme and got accepted. Although difficult at first, my husband started going to the weekly training sessions and soon became paired with a dog called Teddy.

They started to build a bond and as Teddy was trained, it was amazing to see my husband feel proud of his achievements in training Teddy. It also gave me a bit of a break knowing my husband was out of the house and safe.



Teddy is now fully accredited and trained. He goes everywhere with my husband and enables him to get out and about, doing things he couldn't do before. In the past a simple shopping trip would be too overwhelming. Now this is possible. In addition, the peer support that the veterans give each other at the training sessions has improved my husband's mental health so much. Teddy helps with flashbacks and nightmares and the kids adore him. He even comforts them when they are having tantrums!

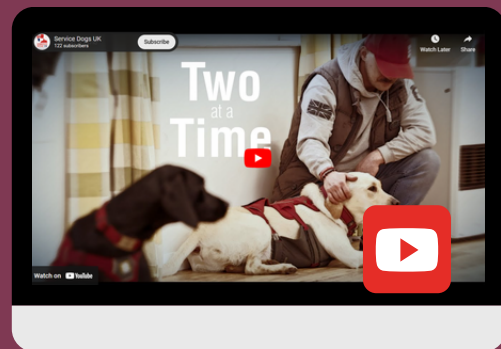
I would highly recommend a Service Dog for the support of all military families where a veteran has PTSD. 😊

*Mary Clare*



Jordan, Mary Clare and Teddy's journey is featured on this powerful film:

[www.youtube.com/@ServicedogsukOrg](http://www.youtube.com/@ServicedogsukOrg)



Service Dogs UK provide veterans suffering with PTSD specially trained assistance dogs. The dogs are selected from rescue centres. Once selected, the dog is then paired up with a veteran and together they embark on an ADI accredited training programme over 9-12 months. The veteran will get taught how to train their dogs, look after them, become a responsible guardian and much more.

This obviously not only benefits the dog, who is rescued and given a stable, loving home but also has significant benefits for the family unit as a whole. Those who have benefited say that the family member suffering with PTSD is given a renewed sense of self esteem and confidence, feels more able to join in with family walks or large family gatherings as well as being happier generally.

Find out more at: <https://www.servicedogsuk.org/>

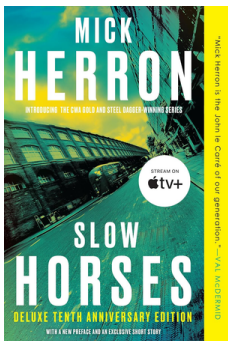
# BOOK CLUB



HAVE FUN | MAKE CONNECTIONS | CHAT ABOUT BOOKS

## LET'S TALK BOOKS

At The Ripple Pond we have an existing Member-led book club who meet regularly to catch up over their book of choice. We are currently reading *Slow Horses* by Mick Herron and will be able to report back in due course with our thoughts!



Do you have a passion for reading? Do you love to sit down with a good book and a cuppa? Or maybe you haven't read a book since you left school and want to get back into the habit?

Open to all our members, drop us an email to find out more: [help@theripplepond.org](mailto:help@theripplepond.org)



Book clubs are a fantastic way to have fun and make connections – and everyone is welcome!

## NEW BOOK CLUB LAUNCHING



We have joined together once more with Reading Force to launch a NEW book club for our Members!! This has been a great opportunity for those who haven't joined a book club before with Reading Force and want to give it a try.

There has been lots of interest this time around and we will be in touch with all those who have secured one of the 15 places available.



## Team Day



## 17TH SEPTEMBER 2024

It's always a good day when we get the team together to think and plan for the future. See some of the bio's further down of our new Team Members or catch the full bio's on our website. Our Team Members are full of enthusiasm and energy to make a difference for families.

[#meettheteam](#)

# TELLING YOUR STORY

## Workshop



This month we led our first Story Telling workshop inspired by our conversation with [Stew Bewley](#).

It was an inspiring evening, and humbling hearing people put words to their stories.

Here are a few of my takeaways from the event:

1. Telling your story is a journey of courage and also hope.
2. What an honour it is, to hear someone tell their story. Each story was different and unique, yet to hear it is inspirational.
3. There is a something that powerful released when you tell your story, both externally, but also internally. There is an internal acceptance and growth that was beautiful to witness.



An intimate and powerful safe place. Was a privilege to be there with such amazing Members

### One Member's Feedback

I'm still processing the evening but learning to tell your story in 2 minutes is a gift ... and there's a simple place to start:

Get a blank piece of paper  
Draw 5 boxes and have a think about the question how did I get where I am now?  
Write your beginning in the first and then the now in the last... and what are some of the steps in between?

This process forces you to focus and be succinct and also helps you see the threads of purpose being woven through your journey.

Then find a trusted friend and tell them, "I'm trying something new and am practicing telling my story in 2 minutes, would you mind listening?"

And have a go!

*Sarah Parkinson*

New date for upcoming workshop:  
**Tuesday 22nd October, 7:30pm - 9pm**



# GET INVOLVED

## We Are The Ripple Pond



As a charity who has the privilege to work alongside over 1000 Members from across the UK. We recognise that supporting a loved one looks different for each one of us, we want to represent you as a community and the diversity that you carry. As part of this we would love to produce a short collage of images and videos that represent who you are so that we can help more families - **could you help?**

Would you be willing for us to use a photo of you as part of reaching out to others? Or could you record a short video of yourself on your smartphone, against a plain background that simply says these words: "We are The Ripple Pond."

Imagine the impact we could have if we can represent the voices of our community demonstrating the whole picture.

If you are please email us at:

**[comms@theripplepond.org](mailto:comms@theripplepond.org)**

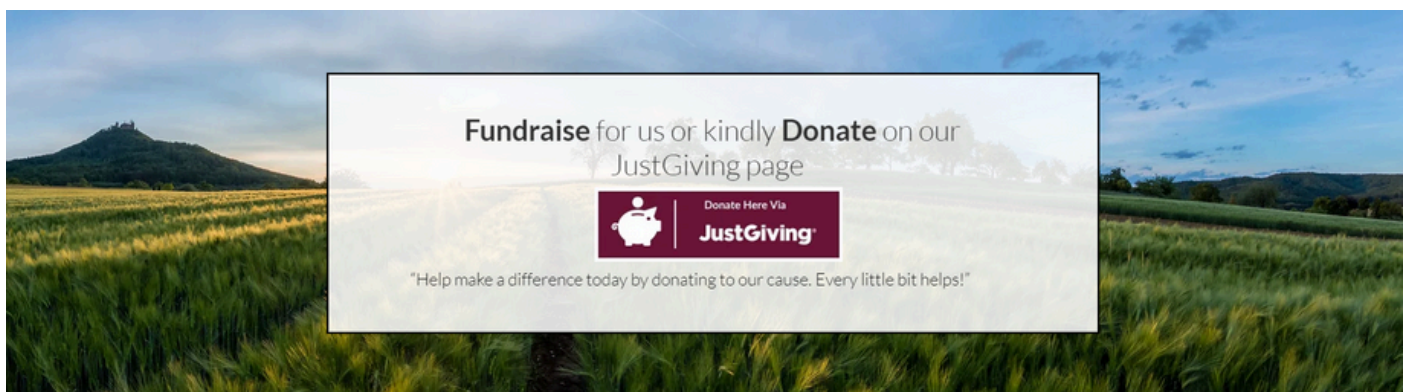
## Raising Funds

The Ripple Pond is far more than just a charity – our Members often tell us that it is their lifeline. Every penny raised helps us to continue to provide support, a sense of community and a safe space for our Members. And guess what? You can be part of this!

Just think for a moment about the power of one small ripple, how it can reach far and wide. That's what fundraising can do for The Ripple Pond. Whether it's donating a small amount regularly, raising money through a fundraiser or by sharing our Just Giving link on our social media pages to your friends and family, every effort you make helps us to achieve more, to help more people caring for injured loved ones.

Individually we may be strong but together, we are stronger. When we bring people, communities together, that's where the magic happens. So, can you help?

[www.justgiving.com/ripplepond](https://www.justgiving.com/ripplepond) 



## GUEST ARTICLE:

### A Journey with The Ripple Pond

I have worked with The Ripple Pond for many years and have always been a big admirer of the organisation and how it has led the way within the Armed Forces support arena. The Ripple Pond shines a light on the need for family members and carers support where there was previously none. Many people often don't understand that behind these men and women are often a network of friends and family supporting trying to be strong, patient who are exhausted out of answers and not knowing where to turn for support. This for me is where Ripple Pond is an industry leader and a bastion of hope and support to these people and why I support them so passionately.

A little about me; I am a veteran who served in the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment for ten years spanning from 2003-13 serving in Iraq, Northern Ireland and Afghanistan. I grew up just outside Portsmouth and for as long as I can remember all I ever wanted to be was a soldier. I absolutely loved my career like many. I have made friends for life along with memories to cherish. I was unfortunately medically discharged in 2013 after a physical injury.

Unbeknown to me I was also suffering from what I know to be PTSD; at that point undiagnosed. For many years I self medicated and was on a path to self destruction until an incident forced me to reevaluate my life. I sought help and support and I have been making a conscious effort ever since to work with my diagnosis to recover and take positive strides every day.

My journey since leaving the military now sees me using my mental illness, journey and recovery to work within lived experience. I develop and lead large scale recovery workforce programmes in the NHS and Charity sector. I am able to use my story to educate, empower and give hope to others who, like me, are setting out on their own recovery journey to find agency and explore what recovery looks like for them.

Outside of the military and my children, this is what I believe to be one of my greatest achievements to be employed in a senior role that allows me to use what most would think as a negative (my diagnosis) as my superpower.



Recovery is never a curve from A to B. It has ups and downs and I'm not doing it alone without the amazing support of my partner and children. It is why I am where I am today and for that I will be eternally thankful to them.

For anyone reading this who may be starting out on a journey, a bit down the road or long in the tooth my takeaways will always be.

#### 01 **1. Be humble, be open, be teachable.**

Honestly I wish someone could have told me this years ago, my 27 year old arrogant self wouldn't listen. I knew best, After many a fall and bruised ego I let people in and I accepted help and it changed my life.

#### 02 **2. Make time for mental wellbeing or be forced to make time for your mental illness.**

This one speaks to me on a deep level, I have burnt the candle at both ends tried every unhealthy support mechanism you can imagine, Embrace change breathwork, cold showers and journaling are not mumbo jumbo. They work, it's a fact and I would be lost without my support tools now.

#### 03 **3. Communication is key**

You know the drill no comms no bombs it's no different out here, People can help you if they don't know what you are feeling. Communication is not all verbal there are many ways you can express yourself; write it down, reflect, edit and then send, but also use voice notes, memes and nonverbal communication such as a look or touch. Try some things out to see what works for you and your support network.

I really look forward to continuing my role within this amazing organisation to ensure you as members are afforded the best possible levels of support and care.

Keep working on you, be kind

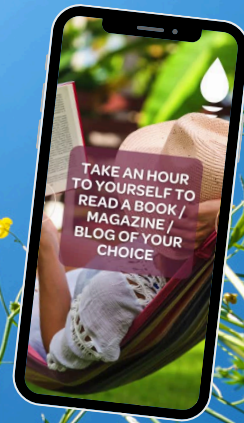
*Dan Arnold*

Dan is a Trustee with The Ripple Pond since September 2023 and a long time supporter of the charity. He works within the NHS as a healthcare and recovery lead.



REFLECTING ON

# TRP SUMMER CHALLENGE



CHECK IT OUT



The kids are back to school, 'normalcy' has resumed, the winter wardrobe has started to make an appearance, and the summer holidays seem like a distant memory – did we even really have a summer?!

If we hadn't taken part in our summer challenge, we think we may have blinked and missed the 'warmer' season all together. But... there's proof – we've loved seeing all of our Member's fantastic photos and hearing about what they've been up to.

From having a picnic in the back garden to taking a walk in the local park, we really made the most of the little things that make summer. Here you can see some of the wonderful things that our Members' and staff got up to.



However, as we move into autumn, it's easier to feel the pressure of returning to busy schedules, shorter days, and colder weather. That's why it's essential to carry forward some of the positivity and self-care habits we may have enjoyed during the summer. Incorporating small moments of self-care as we move into the new season can help maintain a sense of balance and well-being, allowing us to embrace the beauty and coziness of autumn without feeling too overwhelmed.



One way to do this is by continuing to prioritise time outdoors, even as the temperatures cool. Wrapping up warm, pulling on the wellies and taking a brisk walk in the park, admiring the changing colours of the leaves, or simply breathing in the fresh autumn air can be pretty calming. Nature has a calming effect on the mind and body, and staying connected to it can be a gentle reminder to slow down and appreciate the season.

It's also important to nurture ourselves physically. With cooler weather, our bodies tend to crave warmth and comfort, so turning to nourishing meals is another form of self-care. A simple act of making hearty soups, wrapping up under a snugly blanket, lighting candles and sipping a tea, or baking seasonal treats can create a cozy, comforting environment at home. Not only does this nourish our bodies, but it also helps foster a sense of mindfulness and appreciation for the present moment. This, in turn, allows us to navigate the changing seasons with grace and positivity – something that our Members' epitomise.

*Carolyn Aggar*





# VIRTUAL MEMBER MEET-UP



7:30PM- 9PM



YOUR  
FORCES  
FAMILY  
NETWORK

## Dates for the Diary:

We love opportunities to get together online and host regular Virtual Member 'Meet Ups'. These are a brilliant place to meet and connect with other people in a safe and friendly environment hosted by a member of the staff team.

- Tuesday 8th October 7.30-9pm
- Thursday 21st November 7.30-9pm
- Tuesday 3rd December 7.30-9pm
- Wednesday 18th December 7.30-9pm



We also offer specific Virtual Member Meet Ups for our members who are new in the last 6 months, recognising that our newer members may value the opportunity to meet separately.

- Thursday 7th November

We have a new date for our Tell Your Story Workshop, where in a friendly and safe place you have the opportunity to tell some of your story.

- Tuesday 22nd October



We love the opportunity to work alongside The Poppy Factory who are Employment Specialists. Come along to this VMMU specifically focussed around all things Employment, whether you are looking to chat about your work, exploring new job opportunities or just interested to find out more. This one is for you!

- Tuesday 29th October

# Professional Information Session



11am

## PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION Session

Friday 29th November

Join us for a short presentation about The Ripple Pond detailing who we support and what membership looks like, and how to refer to us. There will also be time at the end to answer any questions you may have.

REGISTER NOW

THE RIPPLE POND YOUR FORCES FAMILY NETWORK

If you are a professional working with, or in contact with serving or veteran families and would like to find out more about who we are and what we do, join us for our next Information Session where there will be a short virtual presentation on Microsoft Teams, a chance to meet some of the Team and ask any questions you might have.

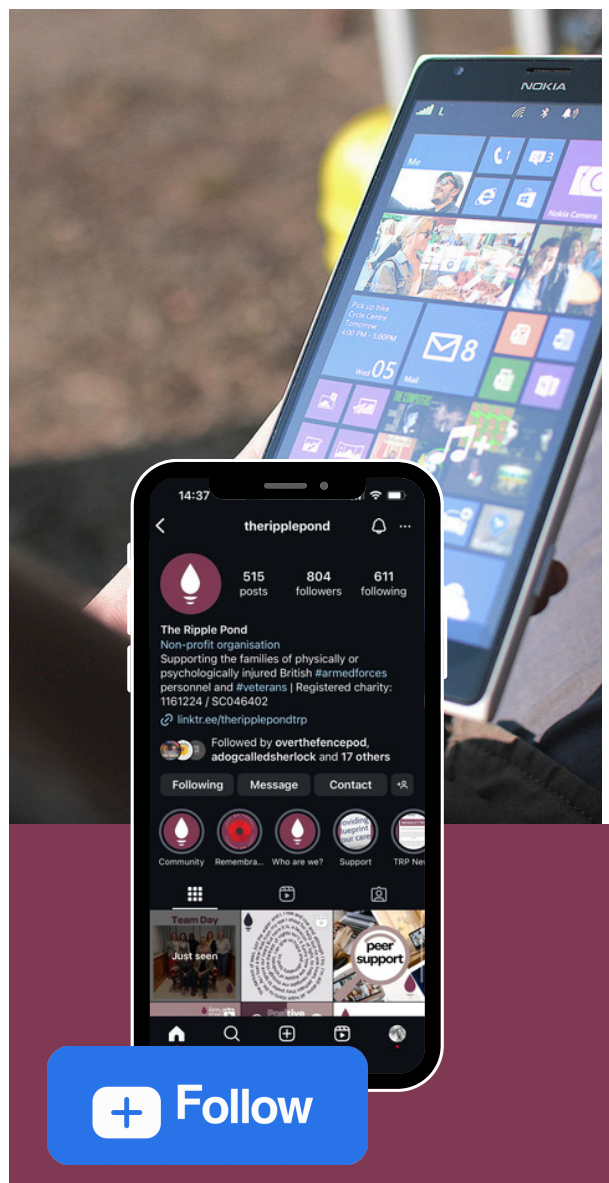
Please feel free to share with colleagues and anyone within your network who may benefit from the session.

## Follow us on social media

We want to curate content that is helpful and meaningful. We believe that everyone caring for a loved one with service attributable injuries should be seen, heard and supported and we are doing our best to get content out, but we would love it if you could help us:

- Could you follow us on the social media platforms you use, we post regularly on: LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and X
- Would you consider sharing our posts to help them reach more people. Statistics show us there are many more in our armed forces community that could benefit from support and we want to make sure they have our details if they need it.

theripplepond



theripplepond

515 posts 804 followers 611 following

The Ripple Pond  
Non-profit organisation  
Supporting the families of physically or psychologically injured British armed forces personnel and veterans | Registered charity: 1161224 / SC046402  
linktr.ee/theripplepondtrp

Followed by overthefencepod, adogcalledsherlock and 17 others

Following Message Contact

Community Rememba... Who are we? Support TRIP Net

Team Day Just seen peer support

+ Follow



# Meet The Team

It's a real privilege to introduce our new staff members; as a charity, we are dedicated not only to meeting the needs of our current members but also to reaching those who have yet to discover us. The Ripple Pond team is expanding, adapting, and making a difference as demand for our services continues to grow at a rapid pace. With our new team in place, The Ripple Pond is well-equipped to further our mission of supporting serving and veteran families.

*Rodger Cartwright*



## CAROLYN AGGAR

Carolyn is our Engagement Officer. She has a varied professional background and a confident, entrepreneurial spirit – she's a strategic thinker who will usually think of the big, bold ideas first then find a way to get them done – although she's actually fairly reserved and prefers to get to know someone before she'll talk their ears off!



## AMANDA SAPSFORD

Amanda joins our team of Member Service Delivery Officers. She is a military wife and mum to three young children, with 6 backyard chickens hatched from eggs during lockdown. Amanda is compassionate, versatile, and a deep thinker, enjoying problem solving and researching. She is a great addition to the team.



## JOYTI MACKINTOSH

Joyti is our newly appointed Finance Manager. She is an accountant and has worked in an array of roles connected with finance in the charity, private and public sectors. Joyti has extensive commercial experience in contract management and procurement, including in the world of auditing.



## REES ALEXANDER DAVIS-CAMPBELL

Rees is the Fundraising Officer at The Ripple Pond and has been working in the charity sector for 5 years. With skills in project & programme management, a deep sense of empathy, and a passion for being the voice of those who need it most, Rees is excited to support the carers and service members who have done so much for others.



# LIFEWORKS

## EMPLOYMENT COURSE FOR FAMILIES

### What is Lifeworks?

Lifeworks is a programme helping families of veterans and serving personnel into work centering around a tailored 4-day course.

### Who is it for?

It's available for spouses and children regardless of whether their connection has served or is currently serving.

### How much does it cost?

The courses are free to participants as they are kindly funded by organisations keen to assist us in providing support to those we help.

### Making an impact

Since 2011, Lifeworks has provided support to more than 6,000 military veterans and their families throughout the UK.



**80%**  
of participants gained employment, training or volunteering within 12 months

**99%**  
would recommend Lifeworks to others

**67%**  
reported improvements to their health from the programme

No matter where you are in the UK, every Lifeworks journey begins with a four day course led by expert vocational assessors, psychologists and employment advisors – many of whom are veterans themselves.

### Our coaches will help you

- Develop a CV
- Understand the hidden job market
- Develop your interview skills
- Adapt to and overcome change
- Set realistic and obtainable goals
- Vocational assessment and career guidance
- Provide ongoing support for a year

### Trudy's story

Trudy's husband, Mark, served in the Light Infantry between 1984 and 1993. When Mike lost his sight, Trudy was forced to leave her job to care for him which she did for 25 years before he sadly passed away.

Trudy decided that she wanted to get back into work so she signed up for a Lifeworks course. The course enabled Trudy to learn how to write a new CV and made her realise that she had some great transferable skills.

Since completing the course, Trudy has held two jobs with her current role in hospitality one that she loves as it allows her to interact with others.



**"Lifeworks made me feel included and taught me several new skills, boosting my confidence immensely. Having a job has given me structure in my life and makes me feel worthwhile."**

### Find out more or book onto a course

✉ [lifeworks@rbli.co.uk](mailto:lifeworks@rbli.co.uk)

☎ 0800 3196 844

🌐 [wearelifeworks.org.uk](http://wearelifeworks.org.uk)

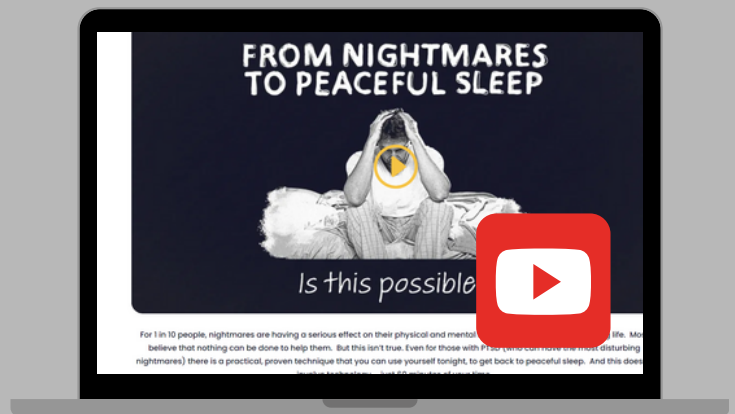


## PREVENTING TRAUMA DREAMS

We regularly take time to listen to the needs of our Members and recognise that a peaceful night's sleep can sometimes be easier said than done.

In previous newsletters you will have seen that we have accessed some brilliant help from Dr. Lindsay Browning looking at Sleep Hygiene. (If you're a Member and not yet discovered this resource, let us know and we can point you in the right direction)

However, we know that it's not only our sleep that can be a problem, our loved ones sleep can be interrupted due to nightmares and night terrors. This resource was recommended to us for our Members, and has been used by NHS, HelpforHeroes and others. Please do check it out and let us know how helpful you found it.



<https://stopnightmares.org/>



# THANK YOU VETERAN'S FOUNDATION

We have recently received a new grant from Veteran's Foundation to help support and grow the work that we do.

Thank you. Our Funders generosity means we can meet the needs of more Members.



## HAVE YOU GOT A STORY TO TELL?



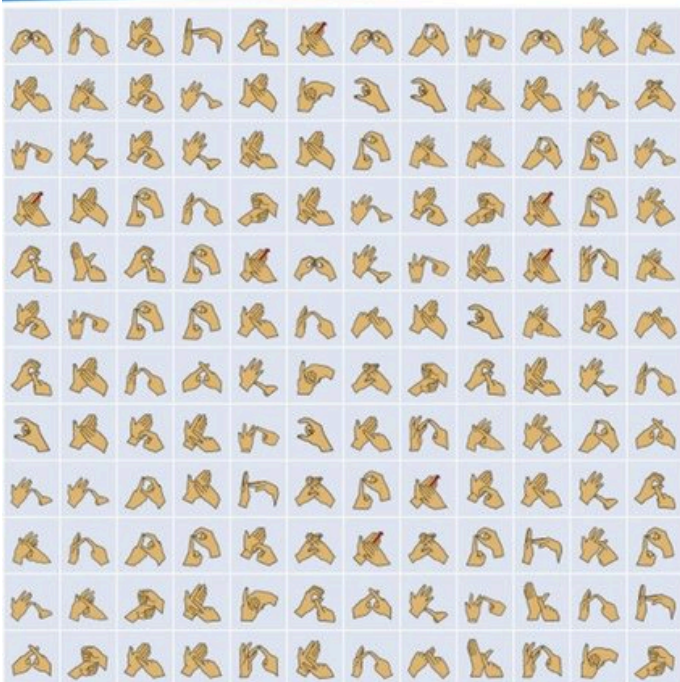
We love celebrating the stories of our Members. If you've experienced particularly good support from an organisation or project, and you think that could help another, please do let us know. Or if you've been involved in a local project, or had success, please get in touch with the details at:

**comms@theripplepond.org**



## BSL WORDSEARCH

THE RIPPLE POND WORDSEARCH  
BSL Fingerspelling SIGN LANGUAGE FORUM



**WORDS**

-- LOVE -- CARING -- RIPPLE -- SUPPORT -- SAFE --

Create your own BSL fingerspelling word search puzzles online at [www.signlanguageforum.com/bsl/](http://www.signlanguageforum.com/bsl/)



Created at [www.signlanguageforum.com/bsl/](http://www.signlanguageforum.com/bsl/)

For International Day of Sign Language we put together this BSL wordsearch... can you spot the words!

There are three main types of sign language – American Sign language (ASL), British Sign language (BSL) and Makaton which is mostly used to help hearing people with communication difficulties.

We also challenged our followers to a little game! [Fingerspelling Game - 2 Minute Challenge](#) ([british-sign.co.uk](http://british-sign.co.uk)). It takes two minutes – can you beat our staff member's top score of 8 (we found it pretty tough!)

Let us know how you do!

If you need support in another language, please don't feel that you are unable to access our services – most of our resources are online and The Ripple Pond will do our best to find support that works for you.



[www.theripplepond.org](http://www.theripplepond.org)