



## Pathway for Growth Phase 2

### Membership Briefing

#### Background

The Royal British Legion is here to ensure that the nation fully embraces and upholds the welfare, interests and memory of the Armed Forces community. When we launched Pathway for Growth in September 2010, we said that we would do this by being

**“the organisation which is, and is recognised as, the no.1 provider of welfare, comradeship, representation and Remembrance for the Armed Forces community”.**

Over the past two years, we have been working on how we will achieve that – what our organisational strategy should be to effectively deliver those four “pillars” of welfare, comradeship, representation and Remembrance – and how we should work to ensure that beneficiaries are at the very heart of everything we do.

We know that the world around us is changing rapidly and that the challenges confronting our beneficiaries are changing. They’re facing tough times and we’re here to support them – but if we are to continue to do that effectively, we must respond to their changing needs.

That is what Pathway for Growth is about. It’s a programme of change designed to ensure that we deliver all four pillars of our mission more effectively including reaching more of our beneficiaries in more areas. We’ve looked at how and where the Armed Forces community needs our help most. And we’ve started to change how we work to ensure we can support them how, when and where they need it most.

#### Changing what we do and how we work

We have a new corporate strategy, outlining what we will do and focusing our work on ensuring we provide welfare support, opportunities for comradeship, campaigning and advocacy for the Armed Forces community, and being the nation’s custodian of Remembrance.

We’ve looked at our organisational culture and involved people in developing our new organisational values. Values unite the way we think, speak and act – the glue that holds an organisation together. Our new values statement is

**“We are responsive, committed, accountable and act with integrity”**

In practice, this means we:

- will listen to all those we engage with
- are committed to working together to do the best for our beneficiaries
- do what we say
- are prepared to stand up and be counted
- want to be the best by doing a good job and respecting each other.



We're also changing **how** we work. We are, of course, a national (even international) organisation but, most importantly, we provide services locally, in communities. We're planning a visible Area presence in 16 major towns and cities across the country, as well as secondary and outreach locations, which might be drop-in or surgeries within communities. The high street "walk-in" centres will feature prominent Legion branding and be open on weekdays and possibly weekends. People will be able to drop-in to our centres to access information online, get face to face help and information from Area teams or volunteers. Each of these centres will have "hot desk" facilities which can be used by other charities, for example SSAFA, who support the Armed Forces community. This local focus will enable us to really get into communities to reach more people. New Area office premises will go live gradually in two phases over 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Some members of the Area teams, including volunteers, will work from this office, offering direct information and advice, handling cases referred by the contact centre, and drawing on the support of Regional specialist teams. It is proposed that others will be peripatetic, travelling around to offer wider community support through secondary locations occupied in partnership with other organisations, or outreach support through drop-ins or surgeries.

We also plan to make it easier for more people to reach us. By the middle of this year, we'll be able to provide information, advice and guidance to beneficiaries, members, volunteers and the general public through a central Freephone number. This will be at a contact centre manned by professional call handlers in the UK seven days a week. A new online facility will also enable people to get access to information and advice through the Internet.

In this way, we'll be able to signpost people to services provided by the Legion or others, or referring them to other specialist services. We'll offer on the spot advice and help with food, shelter or clothing in times of crisis. And rather than just addressing the immediate emergency, our new setup will make us better able to offer a more holistic assessment of those asking for our help, checking entitlement to benefits and grants and offering support to enable our beneficiaries to remain self-sufficient.

Enabling people to access us in these ways will ensure that we are:

- easier to find – both virtually and geographically
- more accessible
- directly relevant to the Armed Forces community
- strongly focused on being there for our beneficiaries when they need us most
- better integrated with a holistic approach to meeting our beneficiaries' needs.

## Progress

We announced our new structure last spring and have made good progress in developing it. We have the three Regional teams in place, led by Assistant Directors (Operations) based in Manchester, Birmingham and Swindon. We have also started to put the Area teams together. The Area Managers now in post have, in consultation with local membership, partners and other stakeholders, been developing detailed plans for how we'll support our beneficiaries by providing welfare, comradeship, representation and Remembrance at local level.



## Staff consultation

On 11 February 2013 we'll begin a period of consultation with staff on the detail of the plans, particularly in respect of the new roles of Case Officer and Advice and Information Officer, which will replace those of County Welfare Officer and County Managers' Assistant. We're asking for their views and ideas on the plans, and we'll take these into account when we finalise the plans at the end of March. We'll begin to recruit to the new roles in April and to begin with, only existing staff whose roles are at risk of redundancy and who have worked at the Legion for more than a year will be able to apply. We may then have to recruit externally but we hope to have the whole Area teams in place in the summer.

County/District Secretary and Membership Administrator roles are not changing significantly and they will continue to support the Membership, while also getting involved in comradeship activities within their Areas.

## Volunteers

Our objective is to increase the amount of volunteering opportunities.

We will not be able to achieve our mission without the continued help and support of Members and other volunteers. If we are to reach more beneficiaries in different ways, we will rely on active volunteers to really engage with the Armed Forces community and the public.

We have identified a range of new volunteering opportunities, enabling Members and other supporters to use their skills and experience to really make a difference. We'll still need volunteers to do casework and visit beneficiaries in their home or in hospital. And of course, we will still be reliant on the thousands of volunteers who collect for us during the Poppy Appeal.

But there will be a range of other ways that people can support our work:

- helping beneficiaries access advice and information
- being on hand to welcome people into the Area office or outreach locations
- helping out with administration
- getting out into the community to spread the word about the full range of the Legion's work.

We will have a central Volunteer Unit in place to ensure that we can properly support the Area teams to recruit volunteers, assess their skills and experience, provide training, give them feedback and generally take care of them.

## Investing in the Future

Pathway for Growth is about improving and increasing our services, our profile in communities, the way in which we deliver services and increasing the ways in which our beneficiaries can access us for help. We can't just carry on what we've been doing for years – the world around us is changing and the Legion must change too. Investing in re-structuring, improving our efficiency and improving outcomes for our beneficiaries is long overdue.

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THE ROYAL BRITISH  
LEGION



Quite understandably, we have been asked what the Pathway for Growth programme will cost and you may have seen the figure of £9m quoted. However, it is impossible to accurately predict what the final investment will be because there are so many variables at this stage. Furthermore, that figure includes expenditure on IT systems which we would have to incur even if we weren't restructuring and doesn't take account of the fact that we'll be vacating many properties, saving the costs of those offices.

We plan to double or even triple the number of people we assist. To do this we will be employing more staff at an estimated cost of £2m who will provide support directly to our beneficiaries. This will be funded from reductions in other budgets. We'll be raising our physical profile in cities, towns and communities right across the country. We currently estimate that this will cost around £5.8m – or £580,000 a year over 10 years. We'll be improving our IT systems at an estimated additional cost of £1m and there will inevitably be some redundancy costs – all of which will be met within approved budgets and funds.

### Next steps

The detailed Area Plans are available to County Chairmen who will be happy to talk to you about them in more detail.

Area Managers are writing to their volunteer caseworkers and Poppy Appeal volunteers to keep them informed of progress and enclosing the attached information leaflet.

### Shoulder to shoulder with all who Serve

This is arguably the biggest change to the way we work in our history. But we are now firmly on the way to transforming The Royal British Legion into the joined up, modern organisation we need to be to continue to be there for the Armed Forces community – to support them how, when and where they need us most.

We need your support to make it happen so I hope that you talk to your Members about Pathway for Growth and will continue to offer your Area Manager and County Chairman the help he or she needs to really make a difference to our beneficiaries' lives in your Area – that's why we're here!

**Chris Simpkins**  
**Director General**  
**February 2013**