



# REME Responders' Handbook

How we support you when supporting your comrades

**LIFTING  
THE  
DECKS**   
*What's On Your Mind?*

ONCE REME  
ALWAYS REME



# Hello and welcome

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with REME Responders and for helping to make a difference to the lives of your comrades who are currently facing issues.

This project will only work with the help of volunteers, spread in all corners of the UK and beyond - ready and happy to help out. The issues you may encounter could be big or small, ranging from just spending some time with someone to assisting them with an issue or referring them for further support. This handbook is written to help you navigate what could potentially be complex and set out clear boundaries and manage expectations. We will advise on what we expect from you and also how we are here to train, guide and support you in anything that comes your way. We aim to forge tighter links within our REME Family and you will play a vital part in that endeavour.

With thanks for all your support

*Babs Harris, CEO, the REME Charity*





# No Comrade should cope alone

## Why we started REME Responders

Being part of the military offers comradeship, help and support, banter and a sense of belonging. It may be something we all take for granted while we have it and it is rarely found in any job in civvy street. This can quickly lead to a sense of loss, not belonging anywhere and feeling like the odd one out. If comrades additionally carry the burden of tough conflict experiences, things can quickly come to a head. The REME Charity knows that many comrades try to cope on their own and we now want to reach out and show them that once you're REME, you're always REME.

**We're here to make sure no one has to cope alone**





# Your volunteering

## What do we expect from you?

- To engage with your volunteering to the best of your ability.
- To bring any comments or concerns you might have to our attention.
- To perform tasks and undertake training in line with your role.
- To support our values and show respect to your comrades.
- To maintain the good name and reputation of the REME Charity throughout your time as a volunteer.
- To volunteer within the organisation's health and safety policies and the boundaries of your role.
- To respect the confidentiality of the organisation and its members.
- To keep staff informed about your voluntary work and feedback to us about your activity.



## What can you expect from us?

- We will give you a clear and defined role profile.
- We will offer flexibility within volunteering opportunities and respect any other commitments you may have.
- We will never give your contact details to the individual concerned and initial contact will be through the REME Charity staff
- We will give you the appropriate training and tools to carry out your volunteering effectively.
- We will pay for your DBS check.
- We will monitor your volunteering and discuss any issues with you.
- We will give volunteers a voice within the organisation • we'll ask for your views and ideas whenever we can.
- We will cover reasonable out of pocket travel expenses.
- We will have adequate insurance to cover you while undertaking voluntary activities authorised by the REME Charity.
- We will follow the policies, procedures and standards of the organisation in relation to volunteers.
- We will resolve any concerns promptly and fairly.
- We will provide references for people who have actively volunteered their time for us.
- We will operate within the spirit of equality, diversity and our values.
- We will celebrate your successes and recognise your achievements.



# How we'll support you

## Induction and training - Supervision and support

### REME Responders

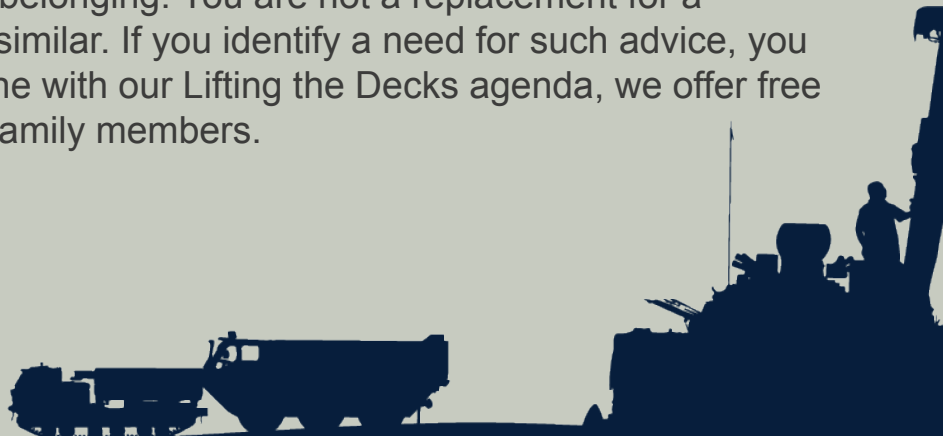
This handbook offers a warm welcome to you to the REME Responders team. We want you to feel confident, happy and prepared in your volunteering role. It is important to us that you have a sound understanding of your role and that you feel you are receiving the relevant support from us.

To be considered for this volunteering role, you need to be over the age of 18, a serving or former member of the REME Corps, a spouse or family member. We particularly welcome those with recent conflict experience, such as Afghanistan or Iraq operations veterans. It is important because we need that insight and experience to offer proper peer support to our comrades who may not have come to terms with their experiences on operations.

All volunteers are asked to complete a short application form which tells us what you are happy to offer. We ask you also to complete a volunteer agreement (Appendix A1) so we can formalise our commitment to one-another and, importantly, for insurance purposes.

As this project is in its infancy, we are relying on you to feed any issues or concerns, problems or bright ideas to us, so we can include them into our wider project design. REME Responders is a true co-production of members of the REME Family. We produce support solutions with our members and consult as much as possible. So, feel free to offer your input.

This is an outreach project which is designed to encourage comrades to engage with the REME Family with the aim to combat loneliness and isolation and to engender a renewed sense of belonging. You are not a replacement for a counsellor, a financial adviser or similar. If you identify a need for such advice, you must inform us for a referral. In line with our Lifting the Decks agenda, we offer free counselling or respite to REME Family members.



## Security Checks and training

We will ask you to initiate a DBS check if you wish to be considered for 'comrade visits' and hope that you understand our reasons of due diligence for doing so. Volunteers who undertake comrade visits will also have to undertake a safeguarding training session. This can be done in your own time online. We will offer other training sessions either online or in person as the project develops. Take up is optional, so don't worry, we are not sending you back to the classroom but hope that most of you will find the training useful, not least in your own life.

## Expenses

The cost for the DBS check – as all other reasonable expenses – can be claimed back via a claim form.

## Confidentiality

It goes without saying that everything you learn from a comrade has to be treated with utmost confidentiality. You can, however, discuss issues with the Corps Welfare Officer or our welfare staff. In most cases, we will already be aware of the problem in hand.

## Health and Safety

During your time as a REME Responder you may learn about the heavy burden some comrades are carrying. If you feel unduly stressed by your volunteering work, we invite you to reach out to us to 'offload' and discuss any issues. If necessary, we will offer counselling to you to ensure you remain mentally fit and healthy.

We will not expect you to deal with any situation that could compromise your health and safety. If a comrade has known issues (i.e. violence), they will not be considered for this project but shall be referred to professional help. We expect you to report any inappropriate behaviour to the welfare team.

## Shopping Help

There may be occasions when you are asked to collect or conduct shopping for people that may struggle getting out and about for whatever reason. Firstly, you are on trust and are clearly a good person otherwise you would not be helping in the first place! Secondly, this is of course common amongst many charities and volunteer organisations so we don't want to over complicate things. During COVID the national volunteer service suggested this was usually done by collecting cash and a shopping list beforehand then returning with the shopping, receipts and change which worked well so we suggest this process is followed when possible. You could also if you wish keep a notebook record of each transaction and ask the recipient to sign in acknowledgement and agreement. Other suggested methods are to help the person make an on-line order which they pay up front and all you do is then collect and deliver the shopping with no cash exchanged and saving them a delivery fee. Put simply, we don't want to be over-prescriptive about this so whatever method you wish to employ do so.

# Some do's and don'ts:

DO NOT	DO
Accept any payment	Declare any gifts or tokens of appreciation to us
Ask a comrade for their bank PIN or handle cash	Refer comrades back to the charity for help and advice
Lend money to comrades	Offer choice to comrades and take their lead to the nature of support
Offer any paid-for professional services to comrades	Listen empathetically and with an open mind
Unduly influence, discriminate or coerce to do anything	Report any untoward behaviour of a comrade or other volunteer to the charity

## Help for Heroes Suicide

### Awareness Training

**HELP** for  
**HEROES**

The Help for Heroes Charity offers a free, 30 minute suicide awareness training course. This can be accessed via their website: <https://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-help/mental-health-and-wellbeing/suicide-awareness/>





## Leaving

We understand that your availability can change over time, please speak to us if you would like to change your role or commitment. If you do decide to leave or want to put your volunteering on hold for a while, all we ask is that you let us know as soon as possible. You are under no obligation to serve a notice period and we thank you for the support you have been able to provide.

## Resolving concerns

If you have a problem or concern about any aspect of your volunteering role it is important you speak to us as soon as possible for advice and support. We take the concerns of our volunteers very seriously and will make every reasonable effort to resolve them.

## The Media

Please do not share any details of your volunteer involvement on social media without the expressed agreement of your comrades. Anything you do share must be identified as your own opinion and not that of the REME Charity. If in doubt, send any ideas for posts to [communications@remecharity.org](mailto:communications@remecharity.org) and we will fact-check and post on your behalf. If you are approached by the media on any issues concerned with REME Responders or the REME Charity, please refer this to us and do not comment.

You've signed up, now...  
**Spread the word!**

We know that word-of-mouth is still the most trusted way,  
so help us (re)connect the REME Family.



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## Important contact details

REME Welfare Officer: <b>Kelvin Redshaw</b>	kelvin.redshaw823@mod.gov.uk 07821 655636
REME Welfare Manager: <b>Bev Hardwidge</b>	welfare@remecharity.org 07936 902415
REME Responders Project Officer: <b>Stuart Cowen</b>	engagement@remecharity.org
REME Association	association@remecharity.org 07590 848 766
REME Charity: <b>Babs Harris</b>	chiefexecutive@remecharity.org
REME Charity Communications: <b>Rory Cahill</b>	communications@remecharity.org
REME Responders Coordinator: <b>Pam Bailey-Yates</b>	pamela.bailey-yates100@learn.mod.uk



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**The REME Charity**  
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