



IMPACT STATEMENT

OUR YEAR IN SUMMARY 2023

“Enhancing the recovery and rehabilitation of seriously wounded service people and veterans”

This Impact Statement covers the period for 2023 and highlights the key achievements, activity and support provided to and by Climb 2 Recovery





WHO WE ARE ... C2R

Climb 2 Recovery supports seriously wounded, injured and sick service people and veterans, all of whom have completed at least two-years of conventional treatment - yet remain chronically and severely disabled by their adversity, through a year-round programme of fully-funded residential adaptive and progressive climbing and mountaineering.

Climb 2 Recovery has been delivering activity since 2016, registered as a charity in 2019, and became an Affiliated Club of the British Mountaineering Council and a Skills Course Provider for Mountain Training UK in 2023. Our programme is well established, has a track record of delivering success and safety, and organisational / charitable transparency and accountability.

Climb 2 Recovery delivered 900-training days (per person/per day) in 2023, supporting 140+ members, of whom 85 members attend multiple courses throughout the year, and we now have the capacity to grow by 60+ members per year from 2024. We sponsor members towards a variety of goals and qualifications, including the Rock-Climbing Instructor, Mountain Leader, and Industrial Rope Access.

Climb 2 Recovery delivered all this in 2023 for **£110,000** that's £121 per person / per day, for which we deliver highly professional evidence-based therapeutic activity, all year round, throughout the country and overseas, supporting hundreds of people, representing exceptional value for money.

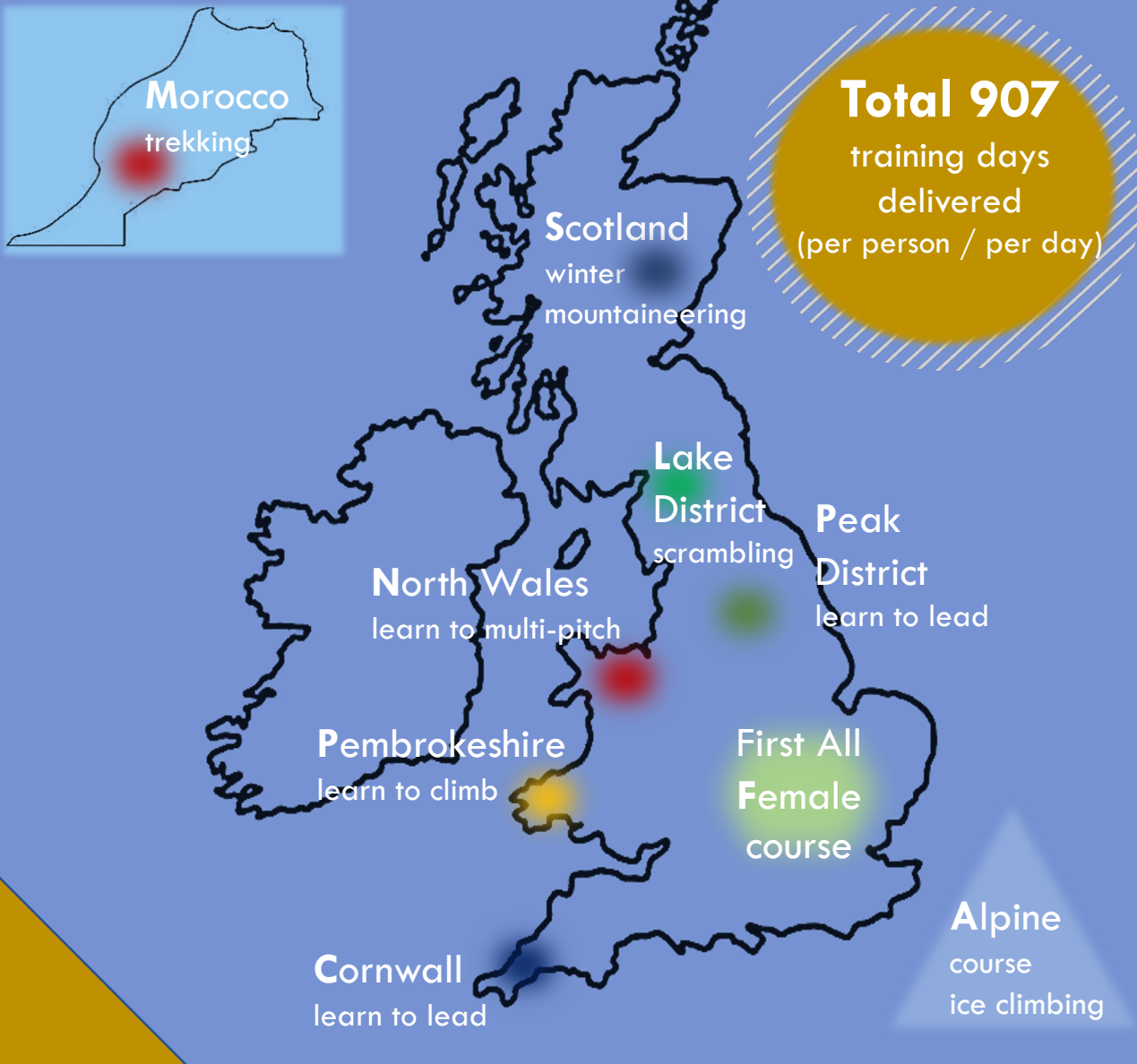


“The impact of this activity is

broad and far reaching ...”



Climb 2 Recovery have provided the following
Individual Training days



COURSES DELIVERED IN 2023



RMA -
The Royal Marines
Charity

Climb 2 Recovery supported the RMA Alpine climbing week in Chamonix



Climb 2 Recovery supported a weekend introduction to rock climbing

Forces Wives Challenge





QUALIFICATIONS ACHIEVED

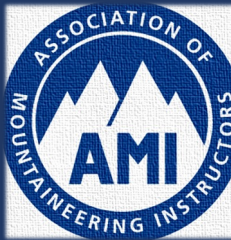
- Climb 2 Recovery have delivered numerous Mountain Training 'Introduction to Rock Climbing' and 'Mountain Skills' courses, as well as;



- Climb 2 Recovery became an Affiliated Club of the British Mountaineering Council



- ✓ We supported 1 x Mountaineering & Climbing Instructor to gain their qualification



- ✓ Climb 2 Recovery supported 1 x International Mountain Leader through their training



- Climb 2 Recovery became a Mountain Training UK Skills Course Provider, enabling;



- ✓ 5 x Mountain Leaders 'Trained' and,
- ✓ 5 x Mountain Leaders Qualified



FUNDING & HOW WE USED IT

For 2023, Climb 2 Recovery received a total of **£93,000** in donations and grants.

All funding was committed or spent.

The total cost of Climb 2 Recovery activity in 2023 was **£110,000**, which means we delivered the entire programme for just **£121** per person / per day.

For 2024, our most exciting schedule yet, we will deliver over 1300+ training days (per person per day) at a cost of **£179,000** and have currently secured **£58,000**.



Sustainable funding
enabling support

'As a veteran it is humbling and inspiring that an organisation can remediate the personal and emotional damage from conflict, in such an effective way. I cannot recommend your organisation highly enough.'

- C2R Member survey, 2023





CEO STATEMENT 2023

Finding the words to sum up Climb 2 Recovery is difficult because we are so much more than just a charity, a climbing club or a training provider.

For me, Climb 2 Recovery is a place of great adventure; a place where we regularly come together to overcome often incredible adversity and far exceed expectations; we are a wonderful community of people, of dear friends, who have fun and laugh together; we accept people regardless of ability, disability or adversity, and nor do we have any expectations or make any demands that people aren't happy with; we thrive in the outdoors and amongst nature, we relish the peace, calm and tranquility; and climbing universally affords us valuable respite, calm from the chaos, time to heal and to find a healthier perspective and outlook.

When we return from the hills, we are stronger, clearer headed, more optimistic, and better able to face the challenges of life, so our time in the mountains really isn't about escaping - it's about living, looking forwards, and constantly striving to do better in the rest of life.

Among our other notable achievements this year we qualified our first qualified **Mountaineering & Climbing Instructor**, the highest award for climbing in the UK and the culmination of four years investing, training and mentoring by C2R; and we became an **Affiliated Club of the British Mountaineering Council** and a **Skills Course Provider for Mountain Training UK**, reflecting the high regard and maturity that Climb 2 Recovery is held in across the climbing and mountaineering world.

This is why Climb 2 Recovery is so unique and our members so frequently describe their experience with us as transformative or life-changing. It's also why I am so proud and honoured to have been invited by the Board of Trustees to be CEO C2R.

C2R CEO Joe Winch 2023





TRUSTEE STATEMENT 2023

2023 represents our 7th year supporting service personnel and veterans that have been wounded, injured, become sick or disadvantaged with physical or mental health injuries. This is also our 4th year operating as a registered charity.

The charity continues to see strong demand for membership with a significant increase in beneficiaries working towards and achieving recognised outdoor leadership qualifications. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our members, many of whom are gaining employment and work experience as they work towards becoming qualified instructors.

The board of Trustees are very proud of the quantity and quality of opportunities that Climb 2 Recovery offer the membership and the meaningful positive change this brings to members lives. All this is achieved whilst continuing to work within a very modest budget. We are committed to allowing the charity to grow to support the increasing demand for our services. We are passionate about continuing to provide advanced opportunities to our more experienced members.

Not only does this aspect allow those members to grow but this also strengthens the competence and ability of the charity to do more in the future.

With our membership now exceeding 140, seeing a significant rise in 2023, it has been incredible to see the peer-to-peer support continue to grow within our community during courses. In fact, this support extends far beyond the formal Climb 2 Recovery activity with friendships and support networks having a beneficial impact on our members lives and assisting members get back into the workplace.

We would like to thank all the organisations and individuals that make C2R possible. We would also like to thank our training partner Adventure Expertise.

Finally, we would like to thank the members for all their hard work and enthusiasm this year. which make our charity so special.

Mac Mackay, IFMGA
C2R Chair of Trustees

A climbing community
for wellbeing



C2R contributes to important research



Over the last two years Lucy Sheen-Harker researched the positive impact of regular climbing on combat-related trauma conditions, like PTSD, using Climb 2 Recovery and our membership towards her Professional Doctorate in Psychology (PhD Psyc). Dr Sheen-Harker's research was driven by the need to better address the psychological challenges faced by wounded veterans, especially given the limited efficacy of traditional trauma therapies on this community.

The C2R members involved in the research revealed profound insights – highlighting the immense challenges of their psychological injuries, and the associated social isolation and sense of disruption to their identity and confidence. Engaging with Climb 2 Recovery's programme though offered them renewed purpose, achievement, and a strong sense of belonging. The members emphasised the importance of continuous involvement (rather than one off experiences) and the anticipation of regular climbing events, which fostered an incredibly supportive community reminiscent of the best of their military relationships. Climbing too was tremendously therapeutic, providing mindfulness-like focus and aiding in staying present, whilst countering the pull of traumatic past experiences, for protracted and extended periods.

**Understanding more
facilitating success**

Moreover, climbing helped the members better manage their anxiety and fear, whilst offering a positive outlet for these emotions. Dr Sheen-Harker highlighted the crucial role of the shared experiences among Climb 2 Recovery members which greatly combated feelings of shame and promoted a sense of deserving support.

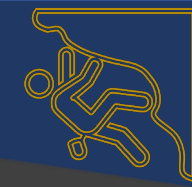
The findings of the research underscored the value of peer relationships and mentoring whilst supporting veterans with chronic psychological difficulties, emphasising the need for a holistic, whole of life, as well trauma-focused approach to recovery. Importantly, the C2R programme, with its parallels to the best and most positive aspects of military life, such as camaraderie and adventure, and the importance of continuous community involvement, served as a powerful means of aiding veterans in their recovery journey.

In short, Dr Sheen-Harker said C2R;

'provides a life-changing opportunity', and that;

'engagement in C2R had been an invaluable experience in providing the members a renewed sense of achievement, identity, and purpose in life'.





OUR MEMBERS

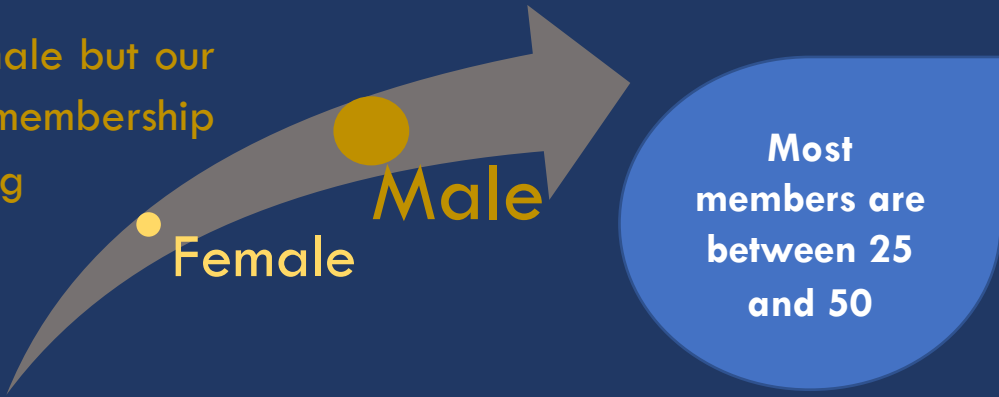
All have completed at least 2-years of conventional clinical treatment and yet remain chronically and severely disabled by their injuries or illness; according to the research what's missing is a holistic approach to healing.

Most are in receipt of Armed Forces Compensation or War Pensions, as well as Armed Forces Independence Payment or Personal Independence Payment.

Many have physical injuries but almost all have psychological injuries and complex mental health problems, particularly PTSD.

They are between 25 and 50; are both male and female; are variously married, with partners or single; are from the RN/RM, Army and RAF; and include Officers, Warrant Officers, SNCOs and non-commissioned ranks.

Mostly male but our female membership is growing



Most are cared for by others, usually a partner, and have dependent children, partners and parents that require support too.

They generally receive little to no other support from other service charities, their local authority or the NHS.

From all over the UK, they tend to reside in less affluent areas.

Some work full-time, though due to their injuries most are part-time or are unable to work; employment tends to increase over time with Climb 2 Recovery.

Generally, life is tough, with little fun or much to look forward, often suffering financial hardships.





OUR MEMBERSHIP

Our members have remained highly engaged and involved with the programme throughout 2023, with almost everyone attending at least one course and returning for several events over the year.

85 very active members attended multiple courses throughout the year.

We gained 29 new members during 2023, all seriously wounded, sick, disabled and disadvantaged veterans, taking our total membership to well over **140**.

The vast majority of our members continue to pursue at least one, and some two to three, professional climbing and mountaineering qualifications - all fully funded by Climb 2 Recovery. Climb 2 Recovery remains the only veterans charity, and climbing and mountaineering charity, that fully sponsors and mentors our beneficiaries through the full hierarchy of Mountain Training qualifications.



29 New members joined in **2023**

'Fantastic opportunity to meet and learn from people in similar situations while being outdoors and active. Immensely grateful for the opportunity and really looking forward to being part of a community going forward.'

- Member survey comment, 2023





MEASURING IMPACT

In online surveys conducted 10 days after Climb 2 Recovery courses, members gave the following responses;

- 100% of members felt more **inspired**, more **determined** in their recovery, learnt new skills, were challenged, had fun, made new friends, had an adventure, felt safe and supported.
- 100% said they were very likely to remain **engaged** with Climb 2 Recovery longer term and work towards various goals and qualifications
- During and following the course, 50% of members reported their mental health, **life-outlook**, optimism and **emotional state** improved, whilst the other 50% reported **greatly improved**.
- Climb 2 Recovery courses, pre-course information and during course administration, overwhelmingly and greatly exceeded the expectations of members.
- 100% would definitely, and without any doubt, recommend Climb 2 Recovery to others.

'Since being a part of Climb 2 Recovery, my mental well being has improved significantly. I find the courses provided have helped me more than any medication I've been prescribed or therapy sessions I've attended.'

- Member survey comment, 2023

Some of our member survey comments;

'Climb 2 Recovery provided an impressive and professional welcoming environment. As a veteran I immediately felt at home amongst my peers from different backgrounds and conflicts. It was a steep learning curve that challenged me mentally and physically. I felt a great feeling of comradeship and inclusion, as well as personal pride in having achieved some climbing skills and gained confidence personally and moving forward into learning more. Watching others gain in confidence, trust, learning and improving their skills was also nice to see. At all times I felt very much part of a team and I am excited to participate in more of the same very soon.'

'I have been involved for 5-years now and will be involved for a long time into the future, I love my Climb 2 Recovery family, it means everything to me, I am a far better person for Climb 2 Recovery, thank you guys.'

'Amazing charity and opportunities for veterans. Very inclusive and enjoyable, made lots of good friends and we stay in touch. Activities always well organised and instructors are amazing! Would and have recommended to others! Will be forever grateful for the opportunities and experiences. Life changing!'

'Amazing support network and felt very safe. The advice and mental health support is so amazing, and wonderful too that I am able to be myself. The best thing I ever did was join this amazing charity. Exciting future with Climb 2 Recovery.'





REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Thanks to a grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund in 2022, Climb 2 Recovery had established a *Regional Programme* to run alongside and complement the main national residential programme.

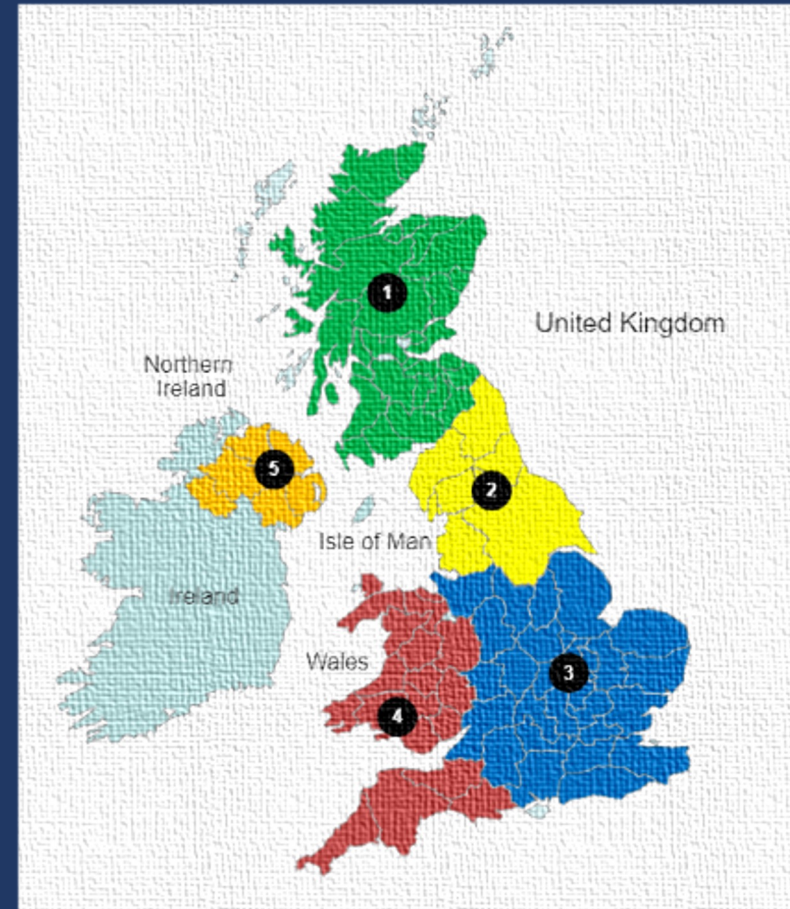
The programme trained and employed a team of beneficiary members as Regional Representatives across the UK, this team planned a range of local activity for Climb 2 Recovery members - the aim was to deliver more climbing, to get together, closer to home and to climb more frequently.

This project has now concluded, though its legacy is a broad network of regional members who regularly and spontaneously organise local climbing events, and which will continue to complement the main Climb 2 Recovery residential programme.

Details on regional events and their schedules of activity can be found on the website.

Regional Courses — Climb2Recovery (c2r.org)

108
training
days



Improving networks

reaching further



MOROCCO EXPEDITION

This first trekking expedition to Morocco for Climb 2 Recovery was undoubtedly a success, measured not in the number of gleaming reviews, but a more human centric, kindhearted, support giving, friendly type. The form of success which you can't quite put into numbers (although we achieved a 100% summit success!) it seems more relevant to put into words.

The expedition was more individualistic and meant something different for all involved. After all, we are a dynamic and diverse group of individuals at Climb 2 Recovery, with specific and some severely debilitating injuries and illnesses, that require so much more than conventional treatment.

Our expedition taught us to be resourceful, to make use of what we have, and to make the best of it. Providing us with an alternative routine, one that was determined by the weather, the conditions, the rise and fall of the sun, the route and our team's ability and decision making. Members had time to reflect, on the day, themselves, conversations they had, all those little interactions, and the journey itself. Whilst trekking around the Toubkal massif we settled into a different routine, gained confidence, challenged ourselves, found our rhythm, and in our own different ways, we recovered.

“If you believe you are ready to take the next step in your recovery journey, then you should go for it!”



A write up of the expedition can be found on our website.

[Morocco Exped — Climb2Recovery \(c2r.org\)](https://c2r.org/Morocco-Exped)



CASE STUDIES & TESTIMONIALS

Your background story ...

Since joining Climb 2 Recovery Jonny has gained some incredible experiences and qualifications, but what has been most profound is how Climb 2 Recovery has enabled him to better understand his circumstances and allow him to finally find peace with his injuries and his past.

"...there is nothing I could have done about being injured by an explosion. The situation was out of my control, so I did my best to crack on and focus on the future, I had never looked back. Being with the members and supporters of Climb 2 Recovery though, I realised there was nothing to fear or be ashamed in my past, with what I had been through. I also realised that my experience wasn't normal, and that I had been through something extraordinary, which has actually made me a better and stronger person, and I can be proud of that".

***"To me Climb 2 Recovery isn't just a charity,
it's a family"***

**Jonny Wallace - Army Veteran
Member since 2020**

"I would absolutely encourage others to get involved with C2R ~ the strength of the wolf is the pack!"

The impact for you ...

Overall, I'm in a good place. Since leaving the services post injury, I have gained numerous outdoor qualifications including Mountain Leader (Summer), Mountain Bike Instructor, Scuba-Diving Instructor and most recently Rock-Climbing Instructor with help and experience gained through C2R. I hope to develop my experience, with a view to gaining further qualifications, and assisting others on their pathway to recovery.





CASE STUDIES & TESTIMONIALS

Olivia's Story ...

Olivia joined the Army Reserves and then transferred to Regular Service where she thrived on the structure, discipline, and adventure. Olivia was full of life, extremely fit and flew through all the military fitness and aptitude tests, beating the majority of her peers and seeing her opportunities and career develop quickly. Olivia had everything she had ever wanted, her health, fitness and a wonderful military career and community.

Suddenly though Olivia was struck down by a serious of serious health complications that eventually led to her being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis.

"I was gutted, and felt like I had lost everything, I had already lost some of my memory shortly after diagnosis, and now to this day I have no long-term, and very limited short-term memory".



Olivia Zambonini - Army
Veteran Member since 2021

"The support I have received from C2R has been incredible, and very encouraging. My initial meeting with Neil and Chris was very supportive, and later I met and climbed with Joe - they are all fantastic."

The impact for Olivia ...

Although still very unwell with MS, Olivia is now in a far better place because of Climb 2 Recovery. Olivia climbs regularly throughout the year and always really looks forward to catching up with friends, helping introduce new members, and having a good laugh at courses. Being more physically active, and particularly being active through climbing, Olivia has found her strength, fitness and independence returning, and her ability to cope with and manage her pain has also greatly improved. In turn, this has allowed Olivia to move about more safely at home and when out and about, and when using stairs, allowing her to do more and reducing her isolation and loneliness.





DEVELOPMENT & ORGANISATION

Climb 2 Recovery is constantly exploring ways of making our organisation ever more efficient and cost effective.

We deliberately don't have any office spaces, facilities or vehicles to pay for or maintain; our courses utilise budget group accommodation and we purchase and prepare all our own food and meals. Our two part-time staff members paid employment is a central part of their ongoing recovery pathway; allowing us to direct all of our funds to support our members.

Even with the cost-of-living crisis and fuel price increases, climbing and mountaineering remain comparatively inexpensive activities - allowing our funds to go so much further and help so many more people.

Increasing support
developing skills



Welcoming **29** new members for the 2023 programme





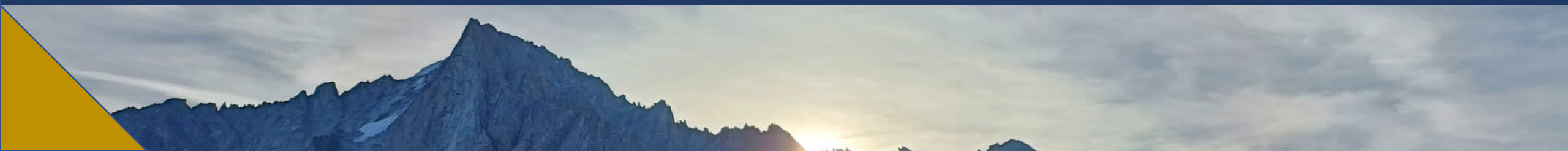
THANKS GO TO ...

We wish to thank all of those who have made donations, volunteered and helped Climb 2 Recovery over this period.

Without your incredible support we would not have been able to offer our program. With special thanks to:

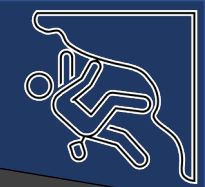
- **Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust**
- **The Veterans Foundation / Veterans Lottery**
- **Neptune**
- **RMA-The Royal Marines Charity**
- **Alpkit Foundation**
- **The Gosling Foundation**
- **Patron Capital Charitable Initiative**
- **Team Forces / Team Army**
- **St James Place**
- **The Wyfold Charitable Trust**
- **Forces Wives Challenge**
- **Carole and Geoffrey Lawson Foundation**

Our Supporters — Climb2Recovery (c2r.org)





PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2023



www.C2R.org
joe@C2R.org
Climb 2 Recovery
3 Coastguard Close, Hampshire,
PO12 2ND
Registered charity number
1186493



