

**PE1744/C**

BRAVEHOUND submission of 11 November 2019

BRAVEHOUND has been partnering dogs with veterans who live with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety.

We have been funded via the Libor fund for three years in order to establish the project, and are mid-way through that period.

Currently BRAVEHOUND have 24 dogs placed with veterans across Scotland, and while we do not yet have the capacity to provide an official evaluation of the role that suitable trained dogs can play we can report on the feedback we have form the clients who have been partnered with BRAVEHOUND dogs.

All have reported a significant beneficial effect, from reduced isolation, to increased confidence and enjoyment of life.

Perhaps more importantly, four have stated that they “would not be here without my (BRAVEHOUND) dog”. One veteran who has significant physical pain to cope with on a daily basis as well as PTSD said “My life is hard, really hard, but he (BRAVEHOUND dog) gets me through the worst days.” Another veteran said “I have tried lots of therapies and courses, psychiatrists and therapists, but nothing had helped as much as this (BRAVEHOUND) dog.”

The benefits of our work are best described by a veteran called Billy with his BRAVEHOUND Max, in this 3 minute film: <https://vimeo.com/354366382>

What is important to state is that we make no clinical claim, we believe that veterans need the input of psychological support that can only be provided by the highly trained clinical staff of organisations like Combat Stress and Veterans First Point, but dogs, and the 24hr companionship they can provide have a hugely positive role to play.

Dogs are not a cheap option. Guide Dogs UK estimate that their dogs cost £55,000 over their lifetime, and although the level of training is less intense, we estimate that a BRAVEHOUND will cost £18,000-£20,000 over its lifetime. We are committed to support each dog’s welfare over its lifetime, and the support includes continued training, social events and welfare support including veterinary care and where required dog food. We would be happy to report in more detail to the committee, and would recommend contacting organisations like DOGS FOR GOOD who have a wealth of research on the positive role dogs can play in all of our lives.