

ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION



THE SAPPER CHARITY

**All communications to be
addressed to:**

The CEO
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Chatham
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See Distribution

4 Jun 2024

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION, HELD AT RAVELIN BUILDING AND ON BOARDABLE ON TUESDAY 4th JUN 2024

Present

Mr K Kirk
Mr N Gunnell
Mr J Allerhead
Mr R Bardsley
Mr M Facchini
Mr M Payne
Mr I Sidebottom
Mr S Scott
Mr A Brown
WO1 S Eardley
Mr P Luscombe
Mr R Tootle
Mr M Dorkings

CEO REA – Chair
Operations Director - Secretary
South East Representative
Committee Member
Committee Member
Central Southern Group Representative
Corps Treasurer
Eastern Group Representative
Deputy Group Director Southern Group
Corps RSM
North Midlands Group
Scotland and NI Representative
National Representative

Apologies

Mr M Heffer
WO1 Tolley
WO1 Milligan
Mr M Heffer
Mr J Brown

Trustee
South Midlands Group Representative
3 RSME Regt
Trustee
Central Southern Group Representative

1. The CEO opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

ITEM 1 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee accepted that the minutes of the [previous meeting](#) were a true record of the proceedings. The CEO signed the minutes.

Proposed: Mr R Bardsley

Seconded: Mr A Brown

ITEM 2 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

ITEM 3 - HQ REA UPDATE

4. The REA Dashboard for Jan – Apr 2024 was presented by the Operations Director (Annex A).

ITEM 5 – CORPS UPDATE

5. The Corps RSM provided an update on:
 - a. Recruitment – The Corps met 93% of its recruitment target.
 - b. Corps RSM is planning Corps Memorial Weekend – The Sunday parade format will be slightly different than previous years.

ITEM 6 - FINANCIAL UPDATE – Mr Ian Sidebottom

6. The Corps Treasurer provided an update of Corps and REA funds. Nothing significant to report.

ITEM 7 - CORPS MEMORIAL WEEKEND ELIGIBILITY

7. Currently Corps Memorial Weekend is only open to members to attend at £30 per person. Following feedback from branch members proposals were put to members to vote on. The options were presented to the committee who were allowed to vote more than once. Votes in brackets¹.

- a) REA Members only to attend Corps Memorial Weekend at £30 per ticket (8)
- b) Non-REA Members allowed as guests at £30 per ticket (4)
- c) Non-REA Members allowed as guests at £45 per ticket (2)

Attendance at Corps Memorial Weekend and the Annual Dinner will only be for REA Members²

ITEM 8 - PROPOSAL TO CLARIFY CHARITABLE GIVING

8. The CEO explained that, intentionally or not, some REA branches were breaching the REA's charitable objectives and therefore the charity status of the REA by gifting REA funds to other charities. Clarity is required on what is and what is not eligible. **Action: The CEO will word a proposal for inclusion in the rules and present it to the Committee.**

ITEM 9 – REA MEMBERS BEHAVIOUR

9. Following allegations of inappropriate behaviour at a Group event, the Committee decided that an investigation should be launched. Once conducted, the findings of the investigation will be presented to the Committee and a course of action decided upon. Concerns were raised about the resourcing of an investigation and the impact on other activity; however it was acknowledged that the investigation takes priority. **Action: The CEO to present his findings at the next committee meeting at the latest.**

ITEM 10 – COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

10. Committee members provided updates of recent and forecasted activity.

¹ Committee Members were allowed more than 1 vote.

² Rule 13.01. REA membership is when an individual has applied for and been issued a Life, All Arms, Friends and Families and widow and widowers membership card from HQ REA. Individual branch membership categories are not recognised by HQ REA.

ITEM 11 – AOB

11. The CEO highlighted the excellent work done by the Lancashire Sappers at their fundraising event held over the weekend. The event is an example of how REA events should be and can be run by branches.

12. The Ops Director reminded everyone that branches were expected to send a representative to the AGM, with those eligible being able to claim travel expenses.

13. The Ops Director asked Rick Tootle to inform the standard bearers that Corps Memorial Weekend was a national event.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 26th November 2024

4 Jun 2024

Operations Director

Minutes Approved

Dated

Chairman

Annex A – HQ REA Dashboard

Annex B – HQ REA Benevolence Report

REA Dashboard Jan - Apr 2024

Benevolence

Cases received	Jan-Apr 2023 186	Jan-Apr 2024 171
Declined	42	33
Approved	133	127
Total assistance	£72,091.24	£80,526.99

Membership

New members	Jan - Apr 2023 178	Jan-Apr 2024 236
New branches	1	
Average age of new members	48	

201 Life, 2 Comp Life, 1 Associate, 9 All Arms, 19 Friends & Family

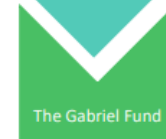
Funds



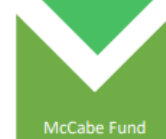
- No of families: 7
- New applications: 0
- Running total 2024: £24898.76



- New applications: 1
- No of grants given: 1
- Amount granted: £25,000



- New applications: 3
- No of grants given: 1
- Running total 2024: £901.97



- New applications: 7
- Applications approved: 6
- Applications rejected: 1
- No of grants given: 6
- Running total 2024: £21477.99

Finance

Income: £440,861.29

Expenditure: £536,578.79

Current investment value: £10,277,965.45

Fundraising

Amount raised (Sep 23 - present) **£11,298**

Number of events/individuals **14**

Governance

Substantial changes to REA rules completed Feb: new membership categories, removal of Annual Membership, changes to expenses for standard bearers/Social Branches/stewardship of branch accounts

ERS Gold Award submission completed March.

Reservist & CFAV leave policy (linked to ERS Silver Award)

9 day fortnight working arrangement began 1st March.

REA Dashboard Jan - Apr 2024

Member Services

Notifications of death via SCRM	55
Notifications of death via other means	22
Coffin drapes out	27
Requests for representation at cremations / funerals	10
Medical discharge notifications via APC	19
Obituaries - Sapper magazine	55

Outreach Activity Jan – Apr

Branch Visits	7
Unit Visits	6

Social Media

Website	Currently not available
Facebook	Engagement Percentage Rate: 4.53% ↓ Follower Increase: 66 ↑ Post Impressions: <i>Avg Jan – Apr</i> 205,675 Page and Profile Impressions <i>Avg Jan – Apr</i> 231,175
Instagram	Followers: 497 ↑ Content Interactions <i>Avg Jan – Apr :</i> 104.75 Accounts engaged <i>Avg Jan – Apr : 195</i> Accounts Reached <i>Avg Jan – Apr :</i> 553.25
X (formerly Twitter)	Followers: 1,016 ↑ Engagement: Avg <i>Jan – Apr 147.5</i>

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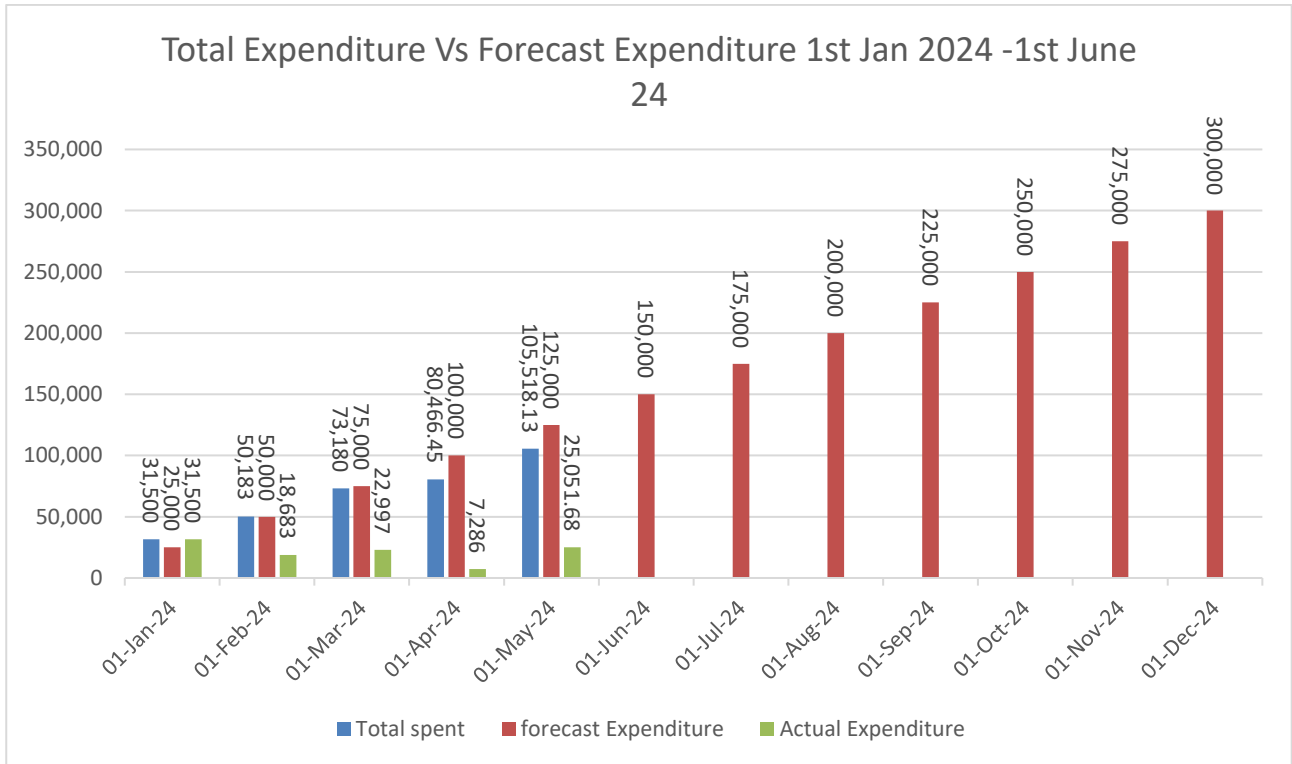
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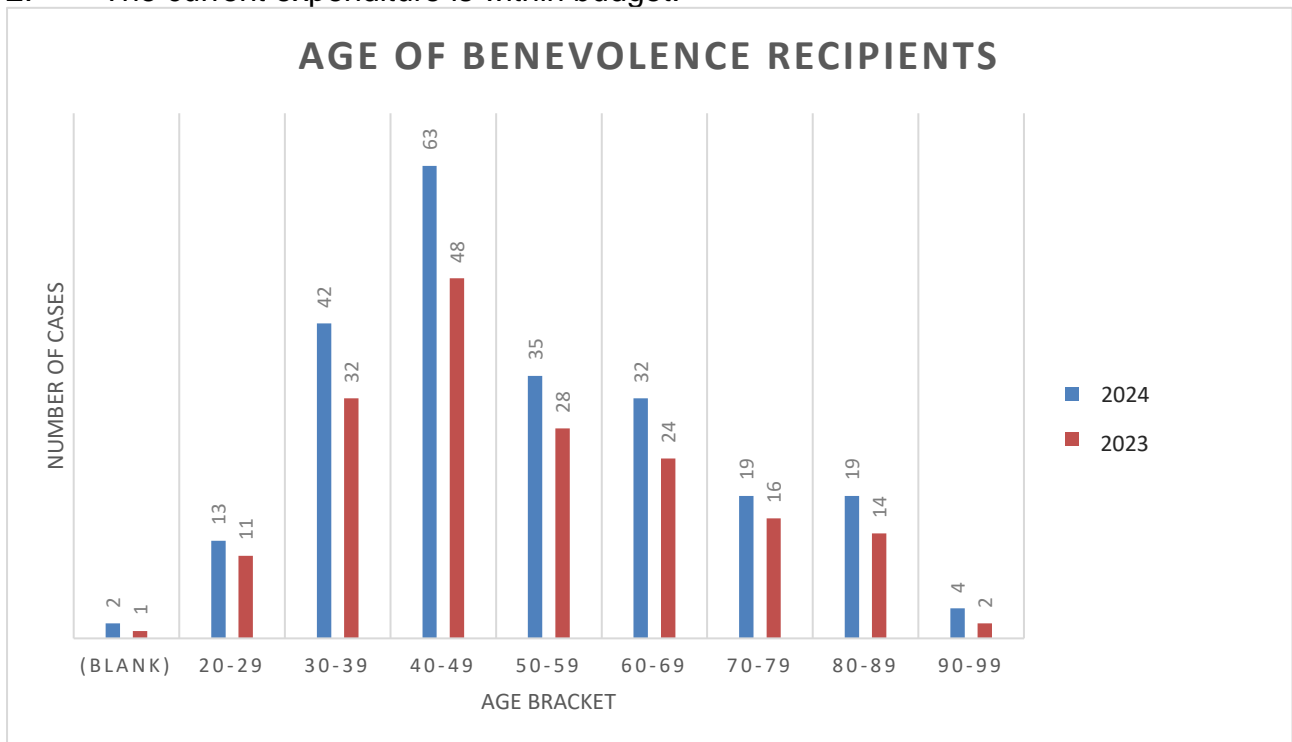
ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL BENEVOLENCE REPORT 1st JANUARY TO 1st June 2024.

1. **Overall Assistance.** Compared to 2023 there has been an increase of 8.6% in the number of cases assessed, with 20.6% being declined. This is compared with 20.4% of cases being declined in 2023. Overall there has been a 12.9% increase in spending however, spending remains within budget.

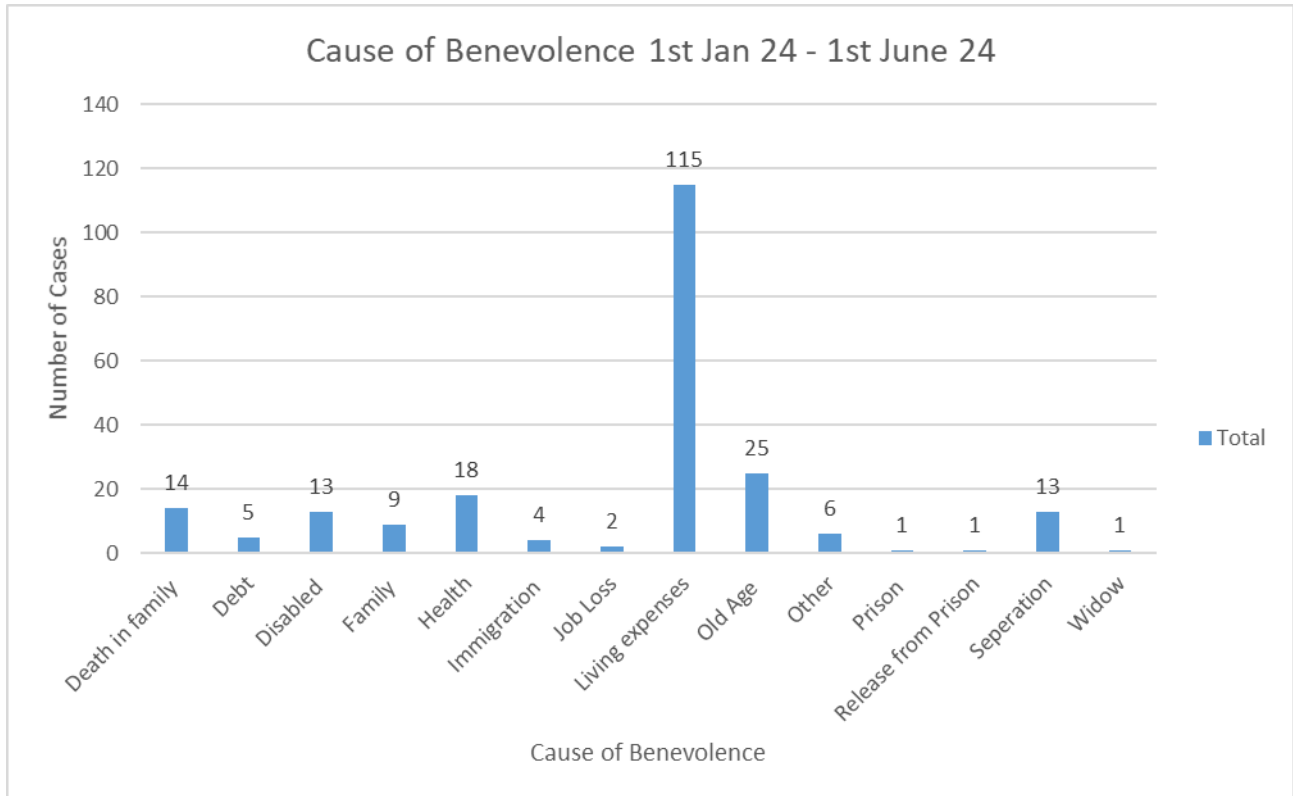
Serial	Data	2024	2023	2022
1	Number of cases assessed	228	210	155
2	Number of cases assisted	165	167	125
3	Number of cases declined	47	43	30
4	Out Of Committee cases	5	-	-
5	Ongoing cases	11	-	-
6	Number of weekly grants in care homes (£##):	£3,744	£2,496	£2,762.50
7	Number of weekly grants at home (£##):	£22,880	£23,595	£25,350
8	Special Christmas Grants	£3,005.00 (Expected)	£3,005.00	£3,195
9	Cases referred by SSAFA, ABF and UWO which were assisted.	107	105	82
10	Cases referred by RBL and other charities which were assisted.	121	105	73
11	Total granted (£)	105,518.13	£93,426.35	71,310.97



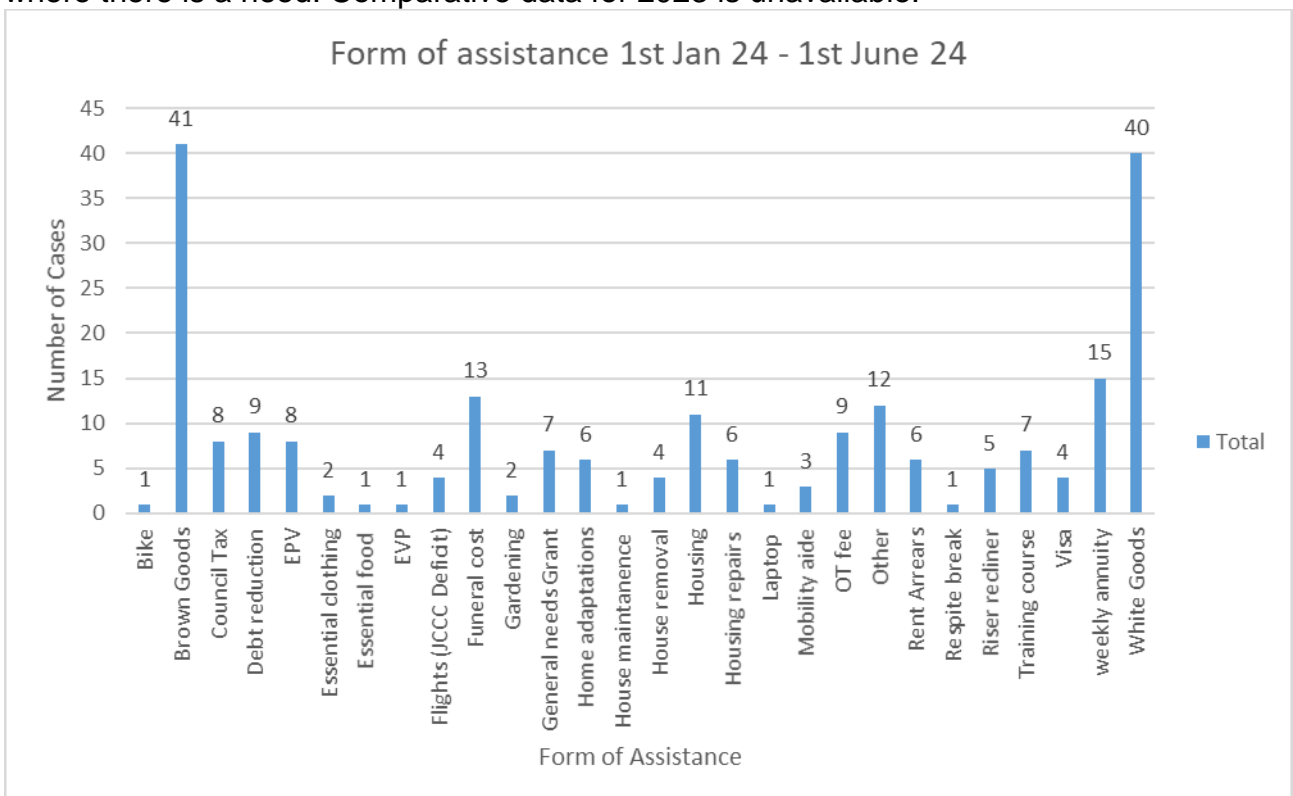
2. The current expenditure is within budget.



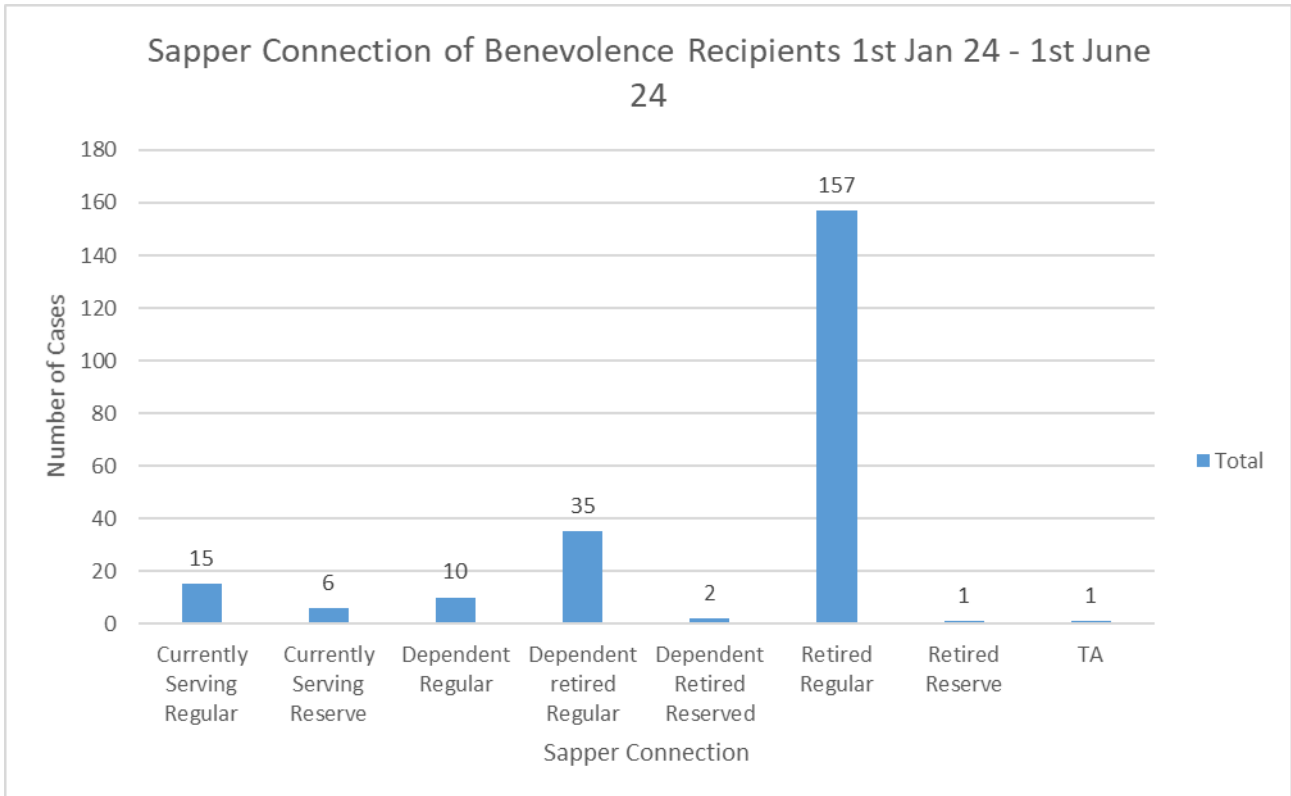
3. **Age.** The 40-49 cohort continues to be the largest group seeking benevolence.



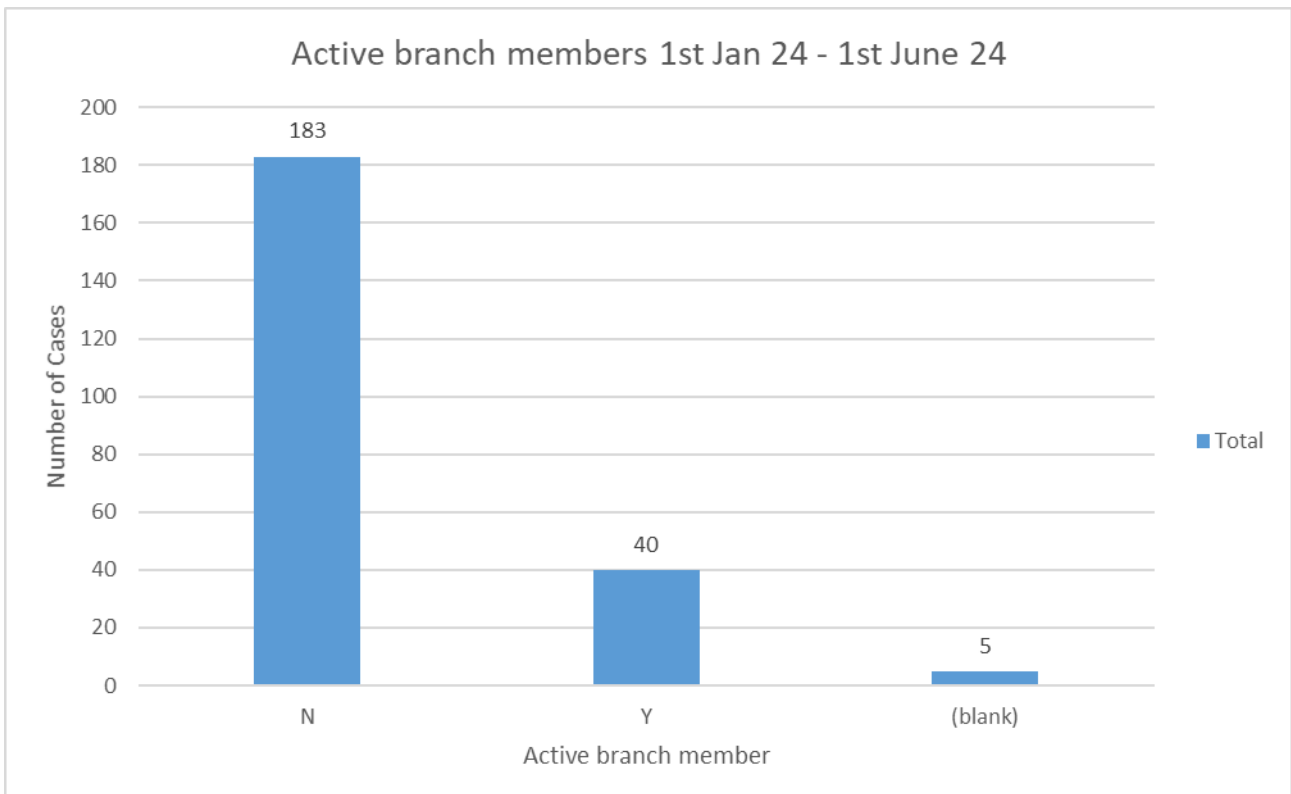
4. **Causes of Benevolence.** Living expenses remain the most prevalent reason for seeking benevolence. However, it must be noted that the REA does not assist with credit card, store card or finance debt. The REA does assist with primary debt and utility bills where there is a need. Comparative data for 2023 is unavailable.



5. **Form(s) of Assistance.** The most common request for benevolence remains domestic goods. Comparative data for 2023 is unavailable.

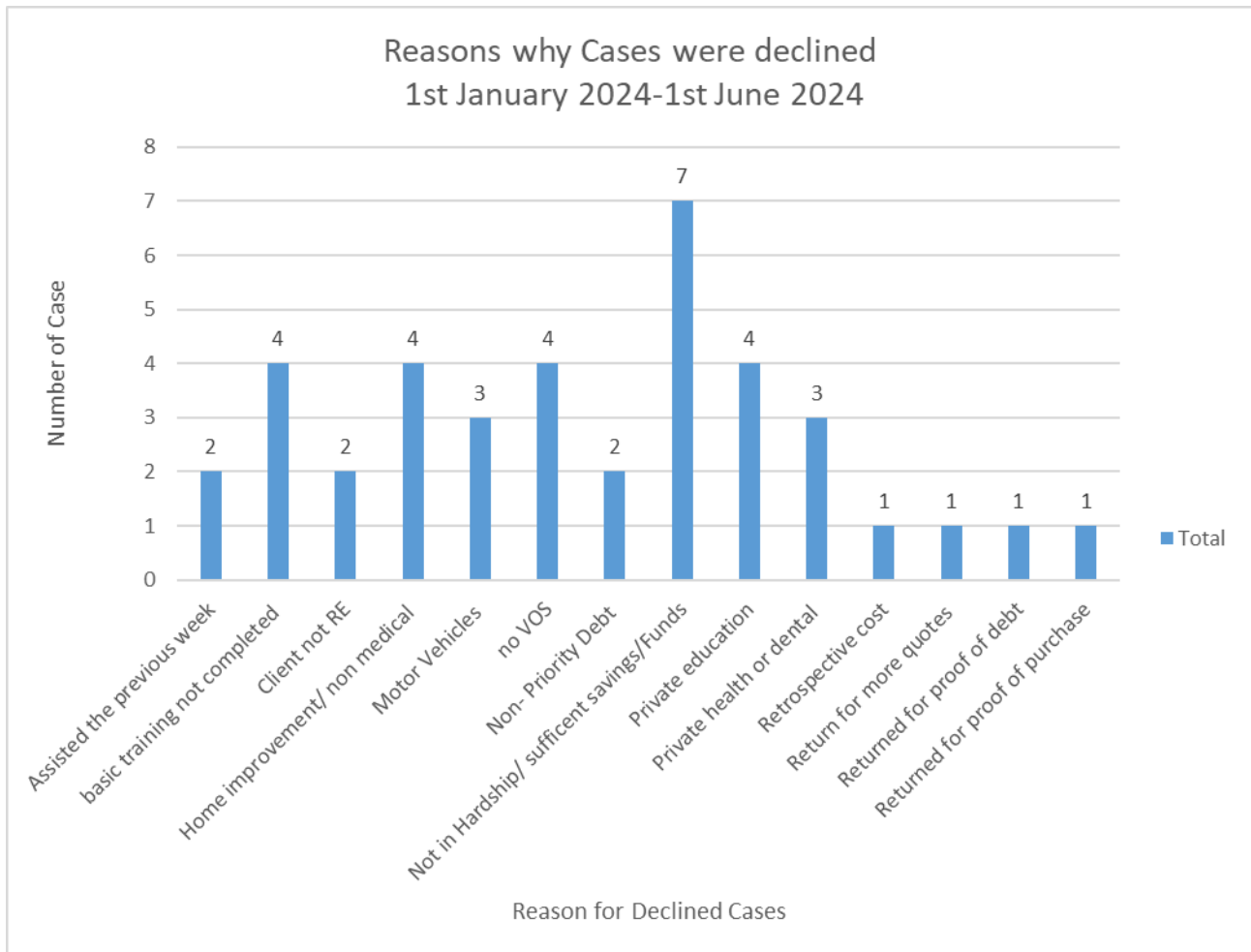


6. The largest cohort of benevolence recipients remains the retired regular component. The dependent regular is a cohort which will be monitored to discern if there is a trend between the Serving members weekly commuting or if the request is from an accompanied service member. This would highlight a relatively new phenomena which has become more prevalent since the Army rebased from Germany.



7. **Branch Membership.** Membership of a branch seems to indicate that the requirement to request benevolence is less likely. However, this statistic does not take into

account the estimated 40,000+ inactive REA members. **(Blanks due to cases coming from Email such as BLESMA)**



8. **Reasons For Case Declined.** The REA can only assess an individual as not being in hardship if the case worker has honestly and thoroughly completed the finance sections on MOSAIC (the case management system). If there are savings and a considerable weekly surplus compared to the benevolence request then it is likely the request will be declined. It should be noted that whilst the [REA benevolence handbook](#) provides guidance on the eligibility for benevolence it is not treated as dogma, allowing each case to be assessed within its unique context.

9. **The Sapper Charity Children's Fund.** The Sapper Charity's Children Fund (formerly the Kitchener Fund) is currently supporting a total of 14 children from 7 families.

10. **Gabriel Fund.** The Gabriel Fund assisted with the retraining of one individual at a cost of £25,000.

11. **Summary.** The collection of the reasons for case declination is particularly useful as it provides an insight to what people think benevolence is and the eligibility required. This information will be used in messaging and overtime it will likely be used to shape future benevolence criteria.

N Gunnell
Operations Director