

Case study: Gurkha Welfare Trust

Since early 2017 we have been working closely with the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) charity. GWT provides financial, medical and development aid to Gurkha veterans, their families and communities. The UK Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development (DFID) are among those who financially support the work of GWT, although the overwhelming source of income is charitable donations from the British public.

Our work focuses on Nepal where many Gurkhas choose to retire, often in remote areas. There the GWT provides primary and secondary healthcare to around 30,000 Gurkha pensioners, their families and dependents.

As part of this service we provide an advisory team to support the work of the GWT and deliver significant improvements in the standard of healthcare. This work included the upgrading and re-equipping of the 21 Area Welfare Centres run by GWT in Nepal and instituting a Continuous Medical Education (CME) programme.

We have helped build a network of secondary healthcare providers to support the pensioners, especially those who live remotely. We have helped source appropriate equipment, such as walking frames and pressure mattresses.

Working with GWT, we have established a robust system of governance, upgraded the clinical protocols and practice guidelines and instituted a programme of continuous

quality improvement. We have improved medical record-keeping and raised the standards of diagnosis and referrals. We have improved oversight and assurance arrangements and helped streamline the claims process. The latter includes developing communications to explain these new arrangements to Gurkha pensioners.

GWT also gives medical support to the wider Nepalese community, arranging medical camps in remote areas. We advise on how to improve these services too.

The outcome has been a clear improvement in the level of medical and welfare support being provided. We are continuing to support the recruitment and training of local staff to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programme.

