

Veterans' project **Impact 2018** **Age Scotland** Love later life

1066 Helpline calls from older veterans for information and advice

£82,545 Total unclaimed benefits Age Scotland helpline found for older veterans.

2143 Veterans-specific advice guides sent to veterans

bit.ly/AgeScotlandVeteransProject
veteransproject@agescotland.org.uk

UNFORGOTTEN FORCES Supporting Scotland's Older Veterans

Above is our 2018 report card. Want to know what we can do for you? Call **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222** for information, advice and free guides. We can help with money, housing, health, future planning and care matters, and introduce you to local clubs and activity opportunities: including ones just for veterans.

Unforgotten Forces takes to the air

Royal Air Forces Association has joined the Unforgotten Forces partnership, bringing additional services for older veterans.

It offers an extensive range of welfare services and can support older veterans who have served as Regulars or Reservists in the RAF and (or) Royal Auxiliary Air Force. Call **0800 018 2361** to find out more or visit www.rafa.org.uk.



About Age Scotland Veterans' Project

The Project supports veterans in Scotland aged 65 and older enjoy the best possible health and well-being. It is part of Unforgotten Forces, a partnership of 16 military and civilian charities delivering a range of services and opportunities for older veterans in Scotland.

Call: 0333 32 32 400 **Email: veteransproject@agescotland.org.uk**
Twitter: @AgeScotVeterans **Facebook: @AgeScotVeterans**
Website: bit.ly/AgeScotlandVeteransProject

Age Scotland, part of the Age Network, is an independent charity dedicated to improving the later lives of everyone on the ageing journey, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland. Registration Number 153343. Charity Number SCO10100. The Age Scotland Veterans' Project is supported by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust funded by the Chancellor using LIBOR funds.



Veterans' project News

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Support for sight and hearing loss

A free advice guide has been published to help older veterans spot if they have early signs of sight or hearing loss, and to get support if they do.

The 'Combatting Sight and Hearing Loss' guide is the work of Unforgotten Forces partners Age Scotland, Action on Hearing Loss Scotland, and Scottish War Blinded. Veterans have a higher risk of hearing loss due to military service, and age increases the likelihood of sight and hearing problems. Yet many soldier on alone: for instance it takes ten years on average from someone first noticing hearing difficulties before they get their hearing tested. The charities aim to change that.



Scottish War Blinded support at its centres (above) and in the community.

Scottish War Blinded supports over a thousand veterans with sight loss across Scotland, helping them develop skills to live independently and providing a network of support and activities to prevent them becoming isolated. Through its Hearing Forces service Action on Hearing Loss Scotland supports older veterans to benefit from hearing aids, which are most effective when fitted as soon as hearing loss is diagnosed.



Free support from Action on Hearing Loss Scotland.

For your free Combatting Sight and Hearing Loss advice guide call: **0800 12 44 222**

Audio format available on USB stick from the above number and online at: www.bit.ly/AgeScotVeterans

Renting? You could be missing out on Housing Benefit

If you rent your home and receive a War Pension you might be eligible for Housing Benefit even if your income would usually be too high to qualify.

By law, councils must ignore the first £10 of any War Disablement Pension or Guaranteed Income Payment you receive under the War Pension Scheme or Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. **However, councils can choose to ignore up to 100% of these payments.**

In December, Age Scotland sent a Freedom of Information request to all 32 councils in Scotland, asking them how much of these payments they ignore.

All 32 councils told us that they ignore War Disablement Pensions and Guaranteed Income Payments in full.

Some of the supplements and allowances that are paid with War Disablement Pensions and Guaranteed Income Payments should also be ignored. These are:

- Constant Attendance Allowance
- War Pensioners Mobility Supplement
- Severe Disablement Occupational Allowance
- Exceptionally Severe Disablement Allowance
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- Certain supplementary payments or pensions for war widows, widowers or surviving civil partners.

This means that if your income is otherwise low, the compensation you receive for injuries or illnesses resulting from your time in the Armed Forces doesn't stop you from being eligible for Housing Benefit.

Most Scottish councils (26 out of 32) told us that they ignore all associated allowances and supplements, not just those listed above.

Find out if you're eligible

For more information about Housing Benefit, or (and) a free benefit check to find out if you may be eligible, call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.



Best of the web for veterans

No older person should be forced to go online. Yet many do enjoy better later lives thanks to digital technology. Now Age Scotland Veterans' Project is sharing the possibilities with older veterans.

The internet is a great way to keep up with family and friends. You can make video calls through free software applications (apps) such as Skype. You can shop, bank and pay bills from your home. You can access vast music, book and video libraries, many free. You can follow latest news, sport and weather. There are also technologies to help people with health conditions and disabilities live life to the full.

It's easy to be overloaded by the possibilities. So we asked internet savvy older veterans about things they liked online, and set up a web-page listing their suggestions. It's called Best of the Net for Older Veterans: web-address below.

bit.ly/BestOfTheNetVeterans

You'll find links to helpful charities and services. For leisure you'll find everything from veterans' groups, to Forces Radio and Pathe newsreels. You can restart friendships and make new friends through sites such as Facebook. And save money, for instance by applying for a Defence Discount Card.

To go online you need an internet connection and a smartphone, tablet device or computer. All cost, but if money is a barrier you may be able to get help. For instance Project Semaphore offers older ex-Royal Navy and Royal Marines free iPads and home internet (call the **Royal Naval Association** on **023 9272 3747**). Often you'll find local

support to go online, for example at **Erskine's** west Scotland activity centre and at **Lothian Veterans Centre**. For local contacts call **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**. If you have sight loss **Scottish War Blinded** offers support at its Paisley and West Lothian centres. Lastly **Abilitynet** offers free training for PC's, laptops, mobile phones and tablets, with volunteer support at arranged locations or in your home (for details call **0800 269 545**). Online security is a concern, but Age Scotland can help: call **0800 12 44 222** for a free internet security advice guide.



Veteran Francis with Keith from Lothian Veterans Centre. Francis is part of the Centre's computer club supported by Age Scotland and AbilityNet. Thanks to a Project Semaphore iPad Francis and his sister in Australia can see and speak to each other whenever they like.