



UNFORGOTTEN FORCES

Supporting Scotland's
Older Veterans

Unforgotten Forces Newsletter No.8 - Spring 2020

Welcome to the Spring 2020 edition of the Unforgotten Forces consortium's newsletter. By the end of March the consortium's partner organisations had, between them and working together, provided over 12,500 episodes of often life changing support for older veterans in Scotland across its five main service areas, namely: practical support, advice, health & wellbeing, countering loneliness & social isolation and arts engagement. Since then of course the Covid-19 pandemic has changed everything for us all and the Unforgotten Forces partnership has had to quickly adapt many of its services to continue supporting older veterans during the coronavirus lock-down.

Although the majority of direct "face to face" services have been suspended, most partners are providing remote support via telephone, e mail, helplines and other virtual media plus direct "doorstep" support with deliveries of groceries and prescriptions etc.

That said, the pandemic has unfortunately resulted in the temporary suspension of two of the consortium's projects namely: Music in Hospitals & Care Scotland's "Play it Again SAV!" music project and Luminate's art engagement work at the Erskine homes, both of which can only be delivered by working in close physical proximity to veterans. It is also with much sadness that Poppyscotland was left with no option but to terminate its Break Away holiday service for older veterans as, very regrettably and for a variety of fairly obvious and practical reasons, the pandemic means that the service is simply no

longer viable either now or in the foreseeable future. Details of the full range of services still provided and revised referral details etc. are available on our website [here](#).

Looking forward however, and on a more positive note, the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust has given approval for a remaining portion of the project's LIBOR funding to be carried forward into a fourth year and this will see the projects' full range of services (minus Break Away) continue until the end of September providing the capacity for a further circa 2000 episodes of support for older veterans. Looking still further ahead the Scottish Government has pledged £750,000 to help maintain our services over the next three years and this means that, although the shape and size of the consortium may change towards the end of this year, it is now clear that Unforgotten Forces will continue to provide vital support for Scotland's older veterans in future.

Meantime, I hope you enjoy reading the following articles and updates about our work and services during the coronavirus pandemic:

- **Specialist Digital Devices are Lockdown 'Godsend' for Scottish War Blinded veterans with sight loss**
- **ERMAC goes online to provide activities & social support for veterans**
- **Self Help Resources from Combat Stress to support mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic**
- **Age Scotland - Keeping older veterans informed and connected**
- **Fares4Free provides vital support during Lockdown**
- **The Highland Veterans' Handyperson Service continues to support veterans during Lockdown.**
- **The Hearing Forces Project - maintaining support for older veterans throughout the pandemic.**
- **DMWS activity in NHS Fife & NHS Lanarkshire in the COVID-19 period**
- **Advertisement: BLESMA - Assisting limbless veterans to lead independent and fulfilling lives.**
- **Advertisement: Royal Air Force Association Job Vacancy**

Specialist Digital Devices are Lockdown 'Godsend' for Scottish War Blinded veterans with sight loss



SCOTTISH WAR BLINDED
FOR ALL VETERANS WITH SIGHT LOSS

Veterans with sight loss are keeping connected during lockdown thanks to “godsend” digital devices featuring specialist vision impairment software.



Tech-savvy National Service veteran, David Weir, 86, of Bathgate, (pictured left) has been using his Synapptic smartphone and tablet to keep in touch with family and friends, sort out groceries and find entertainment while staying at home.

David has eye condition macular degeneration and struggles to use standard screens and keypads due to his low vision.

The “life-changing” devices with Synapptic software feature in-built audio and magnification properties, enabling him to send texts, emails and browse the internet.

David was one of the first veterans to receive a Synapptic smartphone from sight loss charity Scottish War Blinded in 2017. He was introduced to Synapptic technology at the charity’s Linburn Centre in West Lothian, which is currently closed in line with the Scottish Government’s coronavirus guidance.

David said: *“Having this digital knowledge has made a tremendous difference at this difficult time. The lockdown certainly would be lonelier without these devices.*

“Thanks to my Synapptic smartphone I’m able to text my family when I’m in need of groceries. I can write down my shopping list on the notepad feature on my tablet and I’ve been emailing it to my family. It can also read messages out loud to me and I can dictate replies.

“With being home 24/7, I’m using these devices constantly to download talking books. My vision means I cannot see to read. I can also use my tablet as a diary or for entertainment from YouTube.”

David says digital skills can help to fend off feelings of loneliness – something many Scottish War Blinded veterans with sight loss say they have experienced prior to lockdown due to the impact of a visual impairment.

David said: *“Without the introduction I had to all this technology at the Linburn Centre before the lockdown I wouldn’t be doing all this. I think without my phone*

and tablet and the support of Scottish War Blinded things could feel quite isolating.”

Scottish War Blinded provide tailored digital training and Synaptic devices to individuals wishing to learn new digital skills as part of their free support for veterans with sight loss across Scotland. In 2019, the youngest veteran to receive a Synaptic device from the charity was 21 years old. The oldest was 99.

Royal Air Force veteran Jim Archibald, 89, of Pathhead (pictured right), also has age-related sight condition macular degeneration. He began digital training with the Linburn Centre’s IT instructor when he first started receiving Scottish War Blinded’s free support three years ago.



The charity provided him with a Synaptic tablet free of charge which he says is “an essential piece of equipment” for him – now even more so during lockdown.

Jim said: *“The tablet’s been a godsend to me at this time. Any questions I have, I can just go to the web. It’s been very helpful. I’ve been sending an awful lot of emails and sharing pictures over email too as we’ve just had a new addition to the family.*

“It helps me to feel much more connected, without a doubt.”

Scottish War Blinded staff are currently supporting all its veterans across Scotland remotely – they are in touch with each individual regularly via telephone and email to ensure help is in place and to keep spirits high throughout the coronavirus crisis.

David said: *“I’m getting a phone call twice a week for a general conversation from one of the Linburn Centre Officers, which means a lot when you are restricted to staying at home. If any Scottish War Blinded members across the country are in need of help they can give the charity a call.”*

And David and Jim, who had both also been tutoring their fellow members in the IT suite at the Linburn Centre prior to lockdown, say they are looking forward to attending the activity hub again when restrictions are lifted and this difficult time is over.

David said: *“I miss the other veterans’ company and conversation at the Linburn Centre. I also miss taking part in activities I can’t do at home, as well as the outings. I’m certain most of the other veterans feel the same. I’m keeping in touch with some of the other Scottish War Blinded veterans on the phone, it’s nice to speak to them and see how they are.”*

Jim said: *“I do miss the centre. I had been helping some of the other veterans to pass their Synaptic tablet assessments. I’m quite proud of myself that I can help do this, and I’m looking forward to getting back to tutoring them when we can go back.”*

Rebecca Barr, Director of Services, Scottish War Blinded, said: *“Specialist digital equipment and digital training we have provided to Scottish War Blinded veterans with sight loss prior to this pandemic is proving to be all the more beneficial for those individuals during this extremely difficult time.*

“Our veterans need us now more than ever. Our centre staff, outreach workers and rehabilitation team are in touch with each and every person we support via telephone and email, working hard remotely to make sure they know they are not alone and are getting the help they need. ”

Scottish War Blinded gives free support to former servicemen and women of all ages, no matter if they lost their sight during or after service, including National Service. For more information about the support offered to veterans with sight loss call 0800 035 6409 or get in touch online at www.scottishwarblinded.org



ERMAC goes online to provide activities & social support for veterans

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck the Erskine Reid Macewan Activity Centre (ERMAC) wasted no time in getting their community online. Since the first week of lock down they have revised their service provision and started a “Zoom” community which met initially for 2 hours, 3 times per week and has been a lifeline for many to continue socialising with fellow members following such a sudden withdrawal of routine. Things have snowballed since and they are now



up to 6 meets per week with smaller interest groups branching off from the main sessions including Art, Photography, Genealogy and Spouse and Carer meets. They have even had a committee meeting which ensures that members are involved in ongoing

service delivery and decision making. The well-known professional singer Kirsten Orsborne pre-recorded a lovely message of support to all at Erskine which really lifted spirits and ERMAC’s very own veteran member Billy... has entertained them with his guitar, not to forget the virtual VE Day Party Celebrations. For

their members that are unable to access the online community the centre's staff contact them weekly/bi-weekly via a telephone call to have a to provide social support, check on their welfare and provide or arrange swiftly any assistance that they might require. Fellow Unforgotten Forces partners have been a real support with Fares 4 Free supporting many of our members with food supplies, Action on Hearing Loss Scotland have been there to support with hearing aids,



ERMAC member and volunteer Billy Lane entertains veterans over Zoom!

“virtual” guests to keep things varied including Glen MacDonald from Poppyscotland, Neil Morrison representing Veterans Scotland and Jacquie from Home Energy Scotland who provided some very interesting and relevant information for members. Staff have seen some really heart-warming examples of assistance during these



Locked down but not kept down! ERMACs staff & veterans have continued to meet, entertain and look after each other!

tough times whether that's organisations or veterans supporting each other, humanity and comradeship have really been at the forefront of this fabulous community.

Music in Hospitals and care Scotland engaged singer songwriter Jason Sweeney to entertain the members and Poppyscotland's 'Token Gestures' project supported to source a halogen cooker for one of their veterans. They have also invited



Singer Kirsty Orsborne entertains ERMAC members

Self Help Resources to Support Mental Health During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Information available from Combat Stress [here](#)

COMBAT STRESS
FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

Age Scotland - Keeping older veterans informed and connected



The Age Scotland helpline 0800 12 44 222 offers later life information, advice and friendship. When the pandemic began helpline capacity increased ten-fold with Scottish Government support. The team is addressing older people's queries and concerns around Covid-19, connecting them with vital support, offering a listening ear and providing friendship where required. Veterans have been among the many older people benefitting from the expanded service, and a dedicated Coronavirus and Older Veterans webpage has been published as a key resource for our call-handlers and for members of the public.

Age Scotland's postal 'Veterans News' informs older veterans about support and opportunities available to them. Frequency has increased from quarterly to monthly to ensure those without internet access remain connected. With such veterans in mind Age Scotland is establishing a new 'Comradeship Circles' service, with funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. This will allow older veterans to take part telephone groups chats with each other. Comradeship Circles will be up and running shortly: Age Scotland is keen to hear from both individuals interested in taking part and veterans groups with older members who might benefit from taking part. Please email veteransproject@agescotland.org.uk or call 0800 12 44 222 to express your interest.

Age Scotland plays a key role in ensuring the wider community is aware of older veterans, and their needs and entitlements. The pandemic scuppered their face to face roadshow of training events for staff and volunteers in community groups and services, but instead they have delivered the training by video with some great feedback. One participant said: *"I learned so much about veterans and all the support available to them. I will be signposting to Age Scotland and the various organisations mentioned in the training."*

Fares4Free Provides Vital Support During Lockdown



With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic fares4Free saw an immediate demand for food deliveries and the collection and delivery of prescriptions both to those veterans experiencing hardship but mainly for older veterans who normally manage independently but who are now isolating and unable to go shopping. Fares4Free have also been carrying out more low-level welfare checks which has involved simply stopping past at the doorsteps of

veteran clients and enquiring after their general wellbeing to see if they require any additional support. Although journeys to and from hospital appointment initially declined these have picked up again in recent weeks as the health service resumes normal operations.

Although at least 3 times busier than normal Fares4Free are nevertheless finding time to care for the general wellbeing of their passengers as well as the service users of other Unforgotten Forces partners via the delivery to them of “Token Gestures”. Thanks to a generous £1000 grant from Poppyscotland Fares4Free is now able to provide and safely deliver veterans and families of all ages with small tokens that can brighten their time and lift their spirits during lockdown. These take various forms including freshly cut flowers for the widows and wives of veterans, chocolates, afternoon tea for two and small gifts for children and grandchildren. The feedback has been very positive with many veterans and

family members commenting that it was so very nice to know that someone was thinking of them and that they were not forgotten at this difficult time.

One example was the widow of an RAF veteran



has a lovely front garden but no one to share it with. One of drivers took some time out to share a socially distanced pot of tea / a coke and a smile! (pictured above here) It made her day but more than that she's still speaking about it over a week later. The lasting effect has really cheered her up!



Fares4Free staff and volunteers (pictured left) preparing the weekly food deliveries that are making a difference during the lockdown period. It is surprising just how much difference some fresh fruit can make right now to an isolated individual!

Prior to VE day, Fares4Free asked the Russian Consul General in Edinburgh if they could hand deliver just one of their 75 year Commemorative medals of the end of the war to Royal Navy Arctic Convoys WW2 veteran Jimmy Docherty (pictured right) and he was only too happy to oblige. John Symes and David Gibson visited Jim. David read the letter from the Consul General and we all shared a cuppa outside Jimmy's house. It was a lovely moment and much better for Jimmy than receiving the medal in the post. Jimmy is a little more isolated than some of the other Arctic Convoy veterans and Fares4Free make regular efforts to keep in touch with him.



Happy Birthday Jack! Jack Ransom (pictured left) was a Japanese POW after the fall of Singapore in 1942 and worked on the Burma railway. His 100th Birthday was in April, but the lockdown changed his plans.

While Fares4Free's volunteers were spending a day distributing provisions in North Ayrshire, they all turned up below his balcony to sing "Happy Birthday" and have a socially distanced chat with Jack. He was desperate to come down to meet them but they all respected social distancing but nevertheless gave him some company and a lovely memory.

The Highland Veterans' Handyperson Service continues to support veterans during lockdown.



During lockdown, the Highland Veterans' Handyperson service has had to undergo a complete shift in its delivery of the service. Whilst the handyman, Alec, has been on call to undertake emergency work it has obviously not been permitted to visit their clients for those day to day jobs. For the last 10 weeks therefore the majority of his time has been taken up with telephone calls to clients for a catch up, check upon their welfare and to find out how their lives have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic.



That said, now that the lockdown is easing, Alec is very happy to get back to work! The Handyperson service is still prepared and ready with appropriate PPE, safety measures and social distancing to undertake emergency work within people's homes and they are also very pleased to now be able to at

least undertake outdoor home maintenance. The Moray clients have welcomed this step forward, as only last week high winds battered the North. The photos attached are Alec making a new gate for a client in Kinloss as the old one fell foul to the weather. It was decided that whilst the old one could be repaired the timber had seen better days and it was a much better idea to make a new gate, than to return again the next time the wind blew! Needless to say, the client was absolutely delighted. As can be seen from the adjacent photos ILM Highland always takes appropriate health safety measures and the handyman is equipped with gloves and face mask and maintains social distancing when undertaking work at veterans' homes and gardens.



The Hearing Forces Project – maintaining support for older veterans throughout the pandemic



Recent months have brought many new challenges for us all, but on the run up to and throughout lockdown, Hearing Forces has sought opportunities to support older veterans and their families, living with hearing loss or tinnitus. Across Scotland, innovative solutions and partnership working has improved daily living in lockdown for many of our veterans, ensuring hearing loss is not further impacted by isolation and social distancing measures.

Particular successes have included:

- Hearing Forces was delighted to use money sourced from a trust fund, to provide a 99 year old Aberdeen veteran with an Echo Pro Mini-tec personal listener. Having dual sensory loss along with manual dexterity problems as a result of 4 strokes, it was increasingly difficult to insert his hearing aids. The personal listener, when used

with a stethoset, allows the veteran to hear conversations and enjoy his TV much better - a much valued benefit at this time.



- Just prior to lockdown excellent partnership working with NHS Tayside Audiology resulted in a local veteran having an emergency repair carried out on one of his hearing aids. The quick turnaround from referral to repair allowed him to fully engage in a family weekend away which included his wife's 80th birthday party, securing many happy memories for all.
- Further partnership working with NHS Grampian Audiology assisted a veteran who had lost his hearing aids whilst relocating from Angus to Aberdeen. An appointment scheduled for audiology was cancelled on the day of lockdown but following intervention by Hearing Forces and input between NHS Grampian and NHS Tayside Audiology departments, the veteran received a pair of hearing aids by post within 3 days. Although not to his exact specification, they were very similar and feedback from the veteran indicated that he was happy with the replacement aids which were *"working great"*.

- Working in partnership with Erskine Reid Macewen Activities Centre, Hearing Forces was able to support a veteran who had lost his hearing aids and was unable to fully participate in their online catch ups. Having previous involvement with the veteran, Hearing Forces was able to liaise with NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Audiology and temporary replacement hearing aids were sent out based on the veteran's previous hearing test results. The veteran has happily confirmed their use and is regularly joining activity calls.
- Hearing Forces assisted a veteran residing in a local care home following a recent hearing test. Unfortunately, his appointment to be fitted with hearing aids was cancelled due to lockdown measures. Hearing Forces arranged for the aids to be posted out to him with the proviso that support would be provided at a future Audiology appointment to ensure they are specifically adjusted to meet his needs. They seem to be working well enough - care staff were delighted to be told to stop shouting - he can hear them talking perfectly!

Tackling loneliness and social isolation during the pandemic – Legion Scotland's Veterans' Community Support service.



“When the country listened to the Prime Minister tell us that the COVID-19 pandemic was so bad we'd have to stay at home for the foreseeable future, our support teams all over Scotland quickly went into action” reports Legion Scotland's Veterans Community Manager, Tommy Douglas .

A network of Veterans Community Support Co-ordinators (VCSC) and volunteers hit the phones to tell older and vulnerable veterans that help was at hand. Regular home visits were swapped for phone calls and arrangements made to drop off shopping and prescriptions. This adapted service has been greatly appreciated by many older veterans. After receiving support John & Therese Wilson commented: *“We have got letters saying we are high risk, but we have had to do our own shopping because (daughter & son in law) in lockdown with symptoms. I am so grateful for the masks and gloves you gave me they make me feel much safer when I have to go out, also for the shopping and prescription collections I have been unable to do myself, We would really thank you so much for your help, you are very kind!”*

Emily Clark the VDS coordinator in Aberdeen & Kincardineshire's service users reports that: *"There's also another client of ours who's up in Fochabers, Nigel Green, who I've had two different volunteers phoning on a weekly basis – I also arranged for a local community group to deliver loo roll and milk to him a couple of times. He actually phoned me last Friday, and said "I'm so grateful for your help and I appreciate so much having people calling me up to check on me and keep me company, such lovely people, *so I just thought I'd phone you and see how you are*! (which I thought was very sweet!)"*



After Emily sent Ronnie Glennie, a former soldier in Gordon Highlanders (pictured left) , some old military photos to keep him amused he said - *"I've spent a very enjoyable morning pouring over those photos, I've been out with the magnifying glass and everything!"* Little did Ronnie know there was another two bundles heading his way as Emily had

plans to keep him busy.....!

Roy Harrison the VCS Highland & Islands coordinator sent the following quote from his service user Pauline McIntosh (pictured right); *"Fantastic more than anything she could have hoped for, so good of Roy to bother to put himself out to help me."*



Veterans Community Support manager Tommy Douglas explains: *"Our first priority was to let people know what was happening but also tell them they wouldn't be abandoned. I live in a veterans' community, there are some I consider vulnerable, so I regularly go around the those houses just to make sure those who are living alone have what they need".*

ASAP – Continuing advice and Support for older veterans



The Armed Services Advise Service project (ASAP) provides on-going support, with many clients continuing contact over many months and even years. One such client was Peter Duff, a veteran who served in army in the 1960s. Ally Gemmell , ASAP's Stirling adviser, initially supported Peter back in 2015 with an

issue relating to being injured in service, which culminated in the award of a War Pension, but was not concluded until 2018, due to the complex and historic nature of the case. Since then, Peter has been in regular contact with Ally for on-



Peter Duff as a young man in the Army

going welfare support, and is a keen supporter of ASAP and the work done by Stirling Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), even speaking at their AGM about the invaluable benefit to his life and the work done by CAB and ASAP in particular. Although they were unable to meet in person due to the Covid19 restrictions, Ally is providing Peter with advice and support with an on-going legal and financial issue, over the phone, and re-engaged after the

restrictions were eased. Peter said, *'The work done by ASAP has changed and improved my life and has been invaluable. Not only with the advice, I gained a friend'*.

A short film about the work of ASAP featuring the support provided to Peter may be viewed [here](#).

DMWS activity in NHS Fife & NHS Lanarkshire in the COVID-19 period

DMWS remains a full and active member of Unforgotten Forces consortium supporting older veterans in the NHS medical and social care pathway. However, over the past year the service has been funded by the NHS and Health & Social Care Partnerships in Fife and Lanarkshire and as such DMWS staff have been have been re-tasked to meet with their clinical priorities when they changed. The COVID-19 crisis clearly became the primary priority and as such explains why this article is focussed on support to NHS staff during the pandemic. As the situation improves however they are once again beginning to receive more conventional or routine referrals from the veterans' population.



DMWS Update in Lanarkshire

DMWS Welfare Officer in Lanarkshire, Kenny Cumming, is currently working at Wishaw General Hospital and was recently re-tasked as part of the NHS

Lanarkshire's COVID-19 response plan to join 'Team Wishaw'. The Team is located within the Staff Wellbeing Hub which has been set up in the hospital as a temporary measure to support front line medical staff working in the COVID wards during the current health crisis. They implement staff support on various levels including psychological support and peer support. The Hub also provides information to help identify and support changing emotions and have also set up a quiet area to allow staff just to take time out for a short period.



**DMWS Welfare Officer in Lanarkshire
Kenny Cumming**

Within that area DMWS provide complimentary refreshments including teas, coffees, water and snacks. Recently they received a very the kind donation of 1200 breakfast bars from Lidl supermarket in Wishaw.

DMWS update in Fife



**DMWS Welfare Officer Kirsty
Smart**

During this period DMWS Welfare Officers in Fife have been continuing the delivery of services over the phone, initially referrals numbers were much less than usual but are now beginning to pick up as they begin the long journey back to the new normal. Having recently been allowed access back into the hospital discharge hub DMWS staff will be able to provide face to face support for veterans once again both in the clinical setting and through socially distanced home visits in gardens. The

hospital has provided all the required PPE that allows staff to carry out these visits.

Additionally, they have supported their colleague in Wishaw General Hospital as a peer support worker providing support for nursing staff working through these difficult times. This has been an illuminating and invaluable experience for the Welfare Officers.

On a more practical level on the ground in NHS Fife area they have been supporting shielded



Kirsty at work supporting NHS Fife (Still smiling but this time without PPE!)

veterans by delivering much needed essentials, offering telephone support and collecting medication. Within the hospital(s) they have been supporting patients and their families who have no contact due to the COVID-19 virus, supporting staff within the wellbeing hubs and delivering PPE Face Shields to the frontline staff.

The suitably socially distanced picture (below) is of the nursing manager at Queen Margaret's Hospital in Dunfermline, a local veteran, Calum Maxwell and DMWS Welfare Officer, Kirsty Smart. Calum has donated over 1500 face shields



in Fife, by raising money on a PayPal donation page supported by the local community. With these funds Calum managed to purchase five 3D printers and tones of plastic to create the PPE for frontline

workers. He has been working with DMWS to deliver these across Fife to help protect others from the virus. He has just announced these printers and materials will be donated to the local high schools once PPE is in place and there is no further need for the face shields in NHS Fife.

Advertisement: BLESMA – Assisting limbless veterans to lead independent and fulfilling lives.



*Here to assist
limbless veterans
to lead independent
and fulfilling lives*

Blesma is dedicated to assisting serving and ex-Service men and women who

have suffered life-changing limb loss or the loss of use of a limb, an eye or loss of sight whether during or after their military Service. Blesma provides lifelong support to its Members, and following the death of a Member, the widow/widower have membership in their own right and are provided with the same lifelong support; in essence caring for the carer.

Our mission is to assist limbless veterans to lead independent and fulfilling lives and Blesma will work tirelessly to ensure Members are not failed, forgotten, or left to fend for themselves.

Membership categories are:

- Ordinary Membership includes those who lost limbs in Service and those who have lost the use of limbs as a result of Service. It is also open to those who suffer a permanent loss of speech, hearing or sight of an eye. Service must have been in any branch of Her Majesty's Forces or Auxiliary Forces.
- Associate Membership is open to:
 - All men and women of civilian status who lose a limb, or the loss of use of a limb, or an eye as a result of War Service or enemy or terrorist action against HM Forces with which those of civilian status are employed, or volunteer, to provide direct support.
 - All ex-Service men and women, who served in any Branch of HM Forces or Auxiliary Forces, who have lost a limb or an eye, or the use of a limb through traumatic incident, other than through Service-related causes.
 - All men and women of civilian status and all ex-Service men and women, who lose a limb or suffer loss of use of limb, in exceptional circumstances, subject to approval of the Trustees.
- Honorary Membership is open by invitation of the Trustees to all men and women who accept and support the Objects of the Association except that such category of Member shall only have the right to vote when holding or occupying a Branch, Area or Trustee appointment, and are not entitled to charity.

Overview of Membership Services

We offer advice and support to deal with any issue which is affecting health and wellbeing of its members including prosthetic/mobility issues, liaison with statutory and third sector agencies with referral or connection for specialist advice such as housing, employment, residential care and mental health. We also provide financial assistance in the form of grants with the additional costs



and hardships of disability. We regularly contribute to the provision of wheelchairs, stair lifts, and home and garden adaptations so that Members can remain as mobile and independent as possible. We consider grant applications on an individual basis - based on an individual's specific need. We have issued disability grants in the past for mobility aids such as stair-lifts, scooters, wheelchairs and walking frames. We are unique in the fact that Blesma can also help with grants towards the cost of re-decorating your home or maintaining your garden. We do this because we understand that wheelchairs and scooters can easily damage door frames & skirting boards no matter how careful you are.

Our Expertise:

- Providing advice and assistance on war pensions, compensation, and benefits.
- Delivering unique individual welfare support and advice.
- Providing financial assistance to Members to aid their independence and wellbeing.
- Working with the NHS on prosthetic issues.
- Advocating on behalf of our Members on issues that concern them.
- Offering support to elderly Members to help them maintain independence, enabling them to remain in their own homes whenever possible,
- Providing a national annual programme of amputee-supporting-amputee activities.
- Providing regional activities and events within Scotland

Contacts

Blesma Support Officer Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland

Steve Burton: Mob: 07766 258461 E mail: bsosniroi@blesma.org

The role of the Blesma Support Officer is to provide practical and emotional support to Members. He is trained in providing wide ranging support and advice from benefits, War Pension, AFCS, financial grants, independent advocacy to prosthetics and mobility aids; the Blesma Support Officer is out on the ground delivering that support. The Blesma Support Officer is also engaged in executive level meetings in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Blesma Outreach Officer Scotland

Emma Gration Mob: 07884 695703 E mail: outreachscotland@blesma.org

The role of the Blesma Outreach Officer is to support Members and enhance Blesma's profile within Scotland. The Outreach Officer is out on the ground engaging with Members and local communities, representing Blesma at events and meetings and running local activities and events to ensure Members stay connected with each other.

Blesma
THE LIMBLESS VETERANS



Advertisement: Royal Air Force Association Job Vacancy



The charity that supports the RAF family

WELFARE SUPPORT OFFICER - RAF ASSOCIATION EDINBURGH

**Salary: £25175 - £26500 per annum 37.5 hours per week
worked Monday – Friday**

We have an exciting opportunity for an experienced Welfare Support Officer to support the Regional Welfare Manager in their management and support of welfare volunteers to provide support to beneficiaries seeking welfare assistance. The post holder will ensure that people who are eligible for support receive an efficient and effective service.

Requirements of WSO include:

- Up to date knowledge of welfare services and systems
- Experience of using case management databases
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills to able to deal empathically with welfare enquiries

Responsibilities of WSO include:

- Provide a first point of contact and to triage welfare enquiries
- Liase with a range of external agencies to support welfare cases eg social workers, funding bodies etc
- Work in partnership with external organisations and develop strong links with other welfare organisations including charities and Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Identify need and allocate welfare referrals to appropriate welfare volunteers

Benefits of the RAF Association

- Competitive salary with 36 days annual leave
- Up to 10% Employer pension contribution
- Working within a small friendly team supporting the RAF family

Application packs including a full job description are available from jobs@rafa.org.uk

- An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required for this post
- A UK driving licence and access to a vehicle is a requirement of this post

Please note important dates below:

Closing Date 8am Wednesday 10 June
Interview Date Thursday 11 June (using Skype)



UNFORGOTTEN FORCES

Supporting Scotland's Older Veterans

For further information about the services available for older veterans via the Unforgotten Forces project and how to make referrals for support and advice to any of the partner organisations please visit the Poppyscotland website via the following link:

<http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk/get-help/unforgotten-forces/>

For any general and policy related enquiries about the project, or if you would like copies of our hard copy leaflet, a face to face presentation for your members, clients or staff team, or wish any further information please contact the Unforgotten Forces Coordinator, Glen MacDonald (that's not me on the right by the way!), via:

E mail: g.macdonald@poppyscotland.org.uk
or Tel: 07458 014362.



We look forward to hearing from you!

