



# UNFORGOTTEN FORCES

Supporting Scotland's  
Older Veterans

## **Unforgotten Forces – Update on Revised Services During Covid-19 Outbreak as at 15<sup>th</sup> May 20**

The following is a summary of revised services available for older veterans via the Unforgotten Forces consortium partners during the current Coronavirus outbreak as at 15<sup>th</sup> May. Obviously, the situation may change at short notice and further updates will be provided as and when appropriate. Meantime however, with the exception of three of the consortium's service delivery types which unfortunately have had to be placed in abeyance or terminated, the remainder are for the time being continuing to deliver a modified service in support of older veterans as outlined below here in relation to each of the consortium's partner organisations.



### **Action on Hearing Loss Scotland**

[Hearing Forces service](#) staff are now working from home and the services delivered to older veterans in the local communities and at home have at present ceased although staff can still be reached by telephone, email and text message. Contact details by which referrals can be made by geographic area are as follows:

#### **North of Scotland & Project Manager - Angela Paton**

Mobile: 07464 828452

Email: [angela.paton@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:angela.paton@hearingloss.org.uk)

#### **West of Scotland - Caroline McDonald**

Mobile: 07776 596323

Email: [caroline.mcdonald@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:caroline.mcdonald@hearingloss.org.uk)

#### **East of Scotland - Derek Clark**

Mobile: 07823 791 529

Email: [derek.clark@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:derek.clark@hearingloss.org.uk)

**Hearing Forces Project Assistant** (Part-time Mon – Wed) - Heather Hart

Mobile: 07503 925606

Email: [heather.hart@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:heather.hart@hearingloss.org.uk)

General contact with the project via: [hearing.forces@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:hearing.forces@hearingloss.org.uk).

The Hearing Forces team will now:

- Continue to accept referrals and self-referrals, offer phone/text/email support until it is safe to offer appointments/drop-ins.
- Phone regular service users to advise of current situation and offer general emotional, health and well-being support.
- Provide practical advice, guidance and signposting on technological aids to assist in preventing loneliness and isolation.
- Offer a postal battery service to service users.
- Continue to liaise with NHS Audiology on behalf of service users.
- Identify and refer for any limited audiology services available across country e.g. postal repairs.
- Investigate the possibility of carrying out mobile/postal hearing aid maintenance, (when current restrictions lifted), including health and safety practices and robust risk assessments.
- Respond to individual practical needs e.g. sourcing/delivery of new phone for lady in 90's isolated from family with home phone not working.
- Develop a hearing aid hygiene practice factsheet suitable for Hearing Forces client group.
- Look at potential to refer or develop own 'How to' videos.
- Look at potential/options for an Online forum? Web chat? Helpline? Blog?

Updates can be found on their [Facebook page](#).



**Age Scotland**

Capacity at the Age Scotland Helpline (0800 12 44 222) has

been ramped up following a funding boost from the Scottish Government. It has a **special advice page relating to the outbreak**. The Helpline offers a listening ear, information and advice to older people, their families, friends and carers. Hours of operation are 9am-5pm Mondays-Fridays. The service includes connecting people with local support and assisting with questions and anxieties relating to the outbreak. Specialist advisers can assist with more complex later-life enquiries, e.g. benefits checks, by call-back within normally a couple of working days. The large number of additional staff put on to helpline duties have been made aware of the need to record veterans status, and are making referrals to Unforgotten Forces partners.

The Veterans' Project team continues to provide a more general project service including:

- A **postal newsletter** for older veterans: on a monthly basis until at least end June 2020.
  - Older veterans who would like postal updates during the outbreak can call the Helpline 0800 12 44 222 to join the mailing list. We can also take postal details for veterans from Unforgotten Forces partners, by email to [veteransproject@agescotland.org.uk](mailto:veteransproject@agescotland.org.uk), with confirmation in the email that a veteran has consented to receiving the newsletter.
- **Monthly email updates** for organisers of veterans groups and services – [subscription here](#)
- A [new edition of Veterans' Guide to Later Life](#)
- Video-based **alternatives to cancelled outreach activities**, where feasible, including fun physical activity sessions and older veterans awareness training.
- Older Veterans and Dementia Awareness virtual training sessions which can be booked online via Eventbrite. Details are available via this link [here](#).



### **Armed Services Advice Project**

Regional [ASAP](#) Advisers will continue to provide support to clients remotely by telephone and e mail and the ASAP

helpline will still be available from 9am to 5pm Mon - Fri. Tel No: 0808 800 1007.



## Combat Stress

- Hollybush House treatment centre near Ayr is now closed. Further support for clients will be offered via phone and video call.
- Therapists across the country are moving from face-to-face appointments to phone or video call appointments so veterans can continue to receive support.
- Peer Support Service continues as a virtual service via phone and video call. Call the Combat Stress Helpline on 0800 138 1619 for more information and referrals.
- Webinars to help and support partners are planned to continue.
- Currently seeking ways to extend treatment centre Art Therapy online.
- The Combat Stress 24-hour Helpline remains open, providing confidential advice and support to veterans and their families and taking referrals in Scotland. The number is 0800 138 1619.
- Helpful information and guidance on mental health support for veterans during lockdown is available via the following link:  
<https://www.combatstress.org.uk/mental-health-support-during-covid-19>
- And finally — any veteran currently receiving support from Combat Stress can also contact their usual clinical team member for more help and advice via their usual email address or telephone number.
- More information available on their [Facebook page](#).

## Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS)



The three front-line [DMWS](#) staff in Scotland have now had to withdraw from their usual working discharge hub bases within NHS hospitals in both Fife and Lanarkshire. They are also no longer able to routinely visit veterans who have been discharged from hospital but, now working from home, they continue to support them as best they can remotely via telephone etc. and, on occasions they are being requested by NHS staff to visit and support individual veterans in hospitals. They are keen to work collaboratively with Unforgotten Forces partners at this time in support of the wider

consortium's older veteran clients in Fife and Lanarkshire where possible and very much open to suggestions as to how their staff may be able to support this aim. Full details of their staff names contact details are available in the Unforgotten Forces Staff List provided to all partner and recently updated.



## Erskine

Whilst the [Erskine Reid Macewen Activity Centre](#) has had to close our doors during lockdown the team have been working on adapting the service to allow us to continue the invaluable support we provide for our Veterans. The Erskine Reid Macewen Activities Centre aims are to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of Veterans in the community, providing the opportunity to engage with people who have shared experiences and history, learn new skills, explore a number of interests and access support services. With that in mind we have developed our provision accordingly, in line with the ever changing landscape of Government advice.

- We are maintaining regular telephone contact with members, prioritising those whom we have identified as the most vulnerable.
- We ensure they are safe and comfortable whilst providing some light relief and social contact.
- Where we identify there is a requirement for a practical need for vital provisions we can respond.
- We encourage anyone requiring support out with these measures to contact our main line on – 0141 814 4535.
- We have established an online Zoom community where our members can meet and continue to socialise with those who met on a regular basis at the centre. The community includes some much-needed banter, relevant updates and ends with a wonderful mindfulness journey of relaxation and positive thinking with our therapist Morag.
- For those who require technical support our IT Tutor is available.
- The members newsletter created by our Veterans will continue in distribution.
- Where members require more specific support we refer on to organisations that can help.

- We have ongoing consultation with members to adapt and develop support.



### **Fares4Free**

Fares4Free is busier than ever during the Covid-19 pandemic lock-down providing essential support through maintaining contact with older veteran clients by telephone and offering to run essential errands for them such as picking up and delivering groceries and pharmacy prescriptions etc. Where necessary for essential reasons they are still able to drive individual veterans for medical appointments and/or to homeless accommodation centres etc.

They are however also finding time to help care for the mental wellbeing of their regular passengers and service users by delivering “Token Gestures” to them. With the assistance of Poppyscotland they now have access to some funding which is enabling them to provide veterans and their families with small tokens such as a delivery of “afternoon tea for two”, flowers, chocolates or small treats etc. that can brighten their time isolation and help assure them that that they are “Unforgotten”! Contact David Gibson on 07708 299399.

Fares4Free would therefore like to encourage UF partners to continue making referrals where their drivers and vehicles may be able to assist older veterans with the collection and delivery of essential supplies such as food and prescription medications etc.

Find out more on their [Facebook page](#).



### **ILM Highland**

[The Highland Veterans Handyperson Service](#) continues to operate in the Moray, Ross and Cromarty, Sutherland, Nairn and Inverness areas with the Handyperson undertaking external DIY jobs and, where only absolutely necessary, essential internal jobs for older veteran clients at their homes and gardens, maintaining contact with them by telephone and offering to

run essential errands for them such as picking up and delivering groceries and pharmacy prescriptions etc.



**Legion  
Scotland**

### **Legion Scotland**

The [Legion Scotland Veterans Community Support Service](#) has ceased home visits and face to face support for the time being. However, the service continues to provide essential support during the crisis maintaining contact with older veteran clients by telephone and in some areas running essential errands for them such as picking up and delivering groceries and pharmacy prescriptions etc. This is also being done in conjunction with F4F with coordinators and volunteers offering the services should they be required. Legion Scotland's [Facebook page](#) is posting information about coordinator & volunteer activity plus local action to support veterans during the crisis and virtual 'hang-outs'.

Contact details during the current crisis are as follows:

Tommy Douglas

Tel: 0131 550 1560

E mail: [support@legionscotland.org.uk](mailto:support@legionscotland.org.uk)



### **Luminate**

Unfortunately, the "Art Adventures in Nature" project for older veterans at Erskine's homes delivered by the two contracted artists in residence has had to be suspended for the time being and project is therefore in abeyance for the foreseeable future.

However, Luminate know that there are lots of older people at home or in care homes right now who are having to isolate from the wider world for a while because of the coronavirus outbreak, and so we've launched a new programme of online creative activities called **Luminate@Home**.

Short films are uploaded every Tuesday and Friday at 2pm, on [Luminate's facebook page](#) and on our [YouTube](#) or [Vimeo](#) channels or on our [webpage](#). These films have been designed to inspire and guide you through a creative activity that can be done at home or in a care home. The activities are presented by professional artists and feature different arts forms including crafts, poetry, music and dance. The films will be left online so you can access them at any time.



### **Music in Hospitals & Care Scotland**

Music in Hospitals & Care have had to put their Play it Again SAV! Project (providing live music for older veterans) into complete abeyance for the time being and the project coordinator, Vina Oberlander, has been furloughed.

Vina had hoped to provide some online live music streaming sessions during the current crisis but, in the event, this was not possible and they have had to cease the provision of all musical support at present. However, the charity can still be reached via their temporary point of contact as follows:

Isla Campbell Lupton, Head of Fundraising & Communications who can be reached on t. 07494 986878 or [isla@mihc.org.uk](mailto:isla@mihc.org.uk).



### **Poppyscotland**

Full details of services available may be viewed [here](#) and a summary is as follows:

Poppyscotland's welfare centres in Inverness and Kilmarnock are now closed to the public although staff continue to work with clients remotely and can be contacted in the normal way.

Inverness: Tel: 01463 710300 or email: [inverness@poppyscotland.ork.uk](mailto:inverness@poppyscotland.ork.uk)

Kilmarnock: Tel: 01563 598000 or e-mail: [kilmarnock@poppyscotland.org.uk](mailto:kilmarnock@poppyscotland.org.uk)



The Welfare Support Service will only undertake home visits in exceptional circumstances and are currently supporting clients remotely. Referrals for the Welfare Support Service should be made via: [gethelp@poppyscotland.org.uk](mailto:gethelp@poppyscotland.org.uk) or 0131 5501557.

The Welfare Team in Edinburgh are now, by and large, working remotely, they can still be contacted on their normal telephone numbers as follows:

Grants Coordinator: 0131 5501556

Employment Coordinator: 0131 550 1568

Client Engagement & Support Coordinator: 0131 550 1557

Unforgotten Forces Coordinator: 07458 015362

Unfortunately, in the changed circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic during which it will likely not be possible, or perhaps advisable, for people to travel or take holidays for many months or even into 2021, it is with regret that Poppyscotland has been left with no choice but to terminate the Break Away service with immediate effect. All breaks booked have had to be cancelled and those older veterans involved have been informed. Meantime, the Break Away Coordinator, Ann Shepherd, is maintaining contact with her clients to assist with their wellbeing and to make cross referrals etc. and will continue to be employed in that role until 30<sup>th</sup> June in order that the service can be wound down in an orderly fashion. Ann's contact details remain:

Tel: 0131 550 1589

E mail: [A.Shepherd@poppyscotland.org.uk](mailto:A.Shepherd@poppyscotland.org.uk)



## Royal Air Forces Association

**RAFA** is acutely conscious that members of their RAF community such as veterans and their loved ones are particularly vulnerable during the current coronavirus pandemic. Many fall into highrisk categories, and the potential for loneliness and isolation has increased significantly and they may need help more than ever. The need to suppress the

spread of coronavirus clearly means that RAFA must temporarily change its face-to-face approach to avoid placing anyone at greater risk of contracting the virus. A summary of its service delivery situation is as follows:

- Welfare case workers and befrienders are continuing to provide support via telephone and online communications rather than in person.
- Services such as breaks in their Wings Hotels and other facilities and drop-in welfare facilities have been temporarily suspended but RAFA will be keeping in close contact with those who use them.
- Contingency plans in place for retirement housing complexes so that residents who live there can continue to do so in safety.
- Working on alternative ways to deliver essential training and support such as new Finding It Tough? mental wellbeing programme.

Additionally, RAFA is also providing four new emergency projects as follows:

- A telephone outreach service which will proactively support our beneficiaries and other high-risk members of our RAF community to check on their welfare and offer them regular contact (telephone or online).
- A friendship helpline that anyone in our RAF community can call if they are feeling isolated, in need of more specific support or simply want a chat with someone friendly who understands.
- A daily RAF-themed online entertainment slot that people can look forward to as part of their routine while they are isolating, from quizzes to live-streamed sing-a-longs and armchair fitness sessions.
- Bag drops of vital provisions to the doorsteps of the most vulnerable members of our RAF family. RAFA has begun to redeploy employees and volunteers to make these projects happen – and will be contacting its branches and existing volunteer force to ask for their help.

Any RAF veterans in need of RAFA's help and support - or even just a friendly chat – should not hesitate to contact RAFA by phoning 0800 018 2361.



## Scottish Older People's Assembly

All [SOPA](#)'s previously scheduled programme of regional engagement events bringing together and consulting with older people around Scotland have now been postponed for the time being.



## SCOTTISH WAR BLINDED

### Scottish War Blinded

FOR ALL VETERANS WITH SIGHT LOSS [Scottish War Blinded](#) activity hubs at

Linburn and Hawkhead have now closed and all social events and groups have been suspended, as have home visits by the outreach team and rehabilitation officers.

The staff teams continue to maintain telephone contact with all members to ensure their safety and wellbeing. To reduce social isolation staff are chatting to members on a regular basis and providing activities such as quizzes, crosswords and even Name That Tune sessions. Where necessary they are linking members who are struggling to get food, collect prescriptions etc to local groups who can assist. The Rehabilitation service continues to provide essential support, with telephone assessments taking place, and vital equipment to help members cope independently being provided where possible. We will continue to provide a lifeline for our members for as long as the crisis lasts.

The Scottish War Blinded Head Office team is working remotely and are still at the end of a phone line – you can call them on their usual number - 0131 229 1456 option eight or email [enquiries@scottishwarblinded.org](mailto:enquiries@scottishwarblinded.org)



### SSAFA

All SSAFA branches should continue to be contacted through existing emails and telephone numbers for local support.

[SSAFA](#), the Armed Forces charity's central office, Queen Elizabeth House, will be closed until further notice. As far as possible all of its services will continue with all appropriate measures taken to ensure volunteers, staff

and beneficiaries are protected and case working being undertaken remotely over the phone etc. Where possible. Key to this is the ongoing cooperation between the case working organisations and benevolent funds with the sector to ensure that appropriate processes and grants are still able to continue to meet the needs of our community.

Should veterans need advice or support in a time which will be a truly testing few months for all of us they may still contact SSAFA's Forcesline helpline either by phone (0800 731 4880) or live chat during office hours.