



THE QUEEN'S OWN HIGHLANDERS REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the Regimental Associations of the
Seaforth Highlanders and The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders)

Standing Instruction No.4

Welfare Support

The Queen’s Own Highlanders Regimental Association
Standing Instruction No. 4 – Welfare Support

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Distribution

Action:

- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Branches, including Pipe Band

Information:

- Association Trustees
- Chairman
- Facebook Administrator
- Website Administrator

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Objectives

1. The Queen's Own Highlanders Regimental Association ("the Association") aims to promote the welfare of all veterans of the Regiment. The welfare-related objectives described in its Constitution and Rules are:
 - 4.c. To arrange assistance where necessary, to veterans of the Regiment, or to their spouses, widows, widowers, civil partners, or children, giving particular consideration to Members of the Association or their dependants.*
 - 4.d. To grant financial assistance and/or gifts in kind to veterans in distress or necessitous circumstances, or those as previously described.*
2. The aim of this Instruction is to provide guidance on how welfare support is delivered to Association members.

Funding

3. The Welfare Officer at the Headquarters of The Royal Regiment of Scotland (RHQ SCOTS) acts on behalf of the Association on the provision of welfare to veterans. The Welfare Officer assesses all requests for welfare assistance from Association members and their families and makes the final decision on whether to pledge welfare funds or not. In most cases, these decisions are based on advice and recommendations provided by the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) to RHQ SCOTS.
4. Periodically, based on demand, the Welfare Officer will ask for a lump sum of money from the Association to part-fund the welfare provision throughout the year. This is then paid by the Treasurer once the appropriate approval is given. These payments are reported to the Association Trustees and the Annual General Meeting along with an anonymised summary of the welfare provided over that year. The Regimental Association has pledged to top up this lump sum when requested by the Welfare Officer.

Welfare Support Process

Identification of Need

5. The identification of need can come from a variety of sources, very often from concerned family members or friends aware of a person in need who served in HM Forces. Any concerned person or applicant should then contact SSAFA directly (see the Useful Contact details below) or get in touch with the Regimental Association.

Referral to SSAFA

6. Once a welfare case is identified, it must be referred straight away to SSAFA. If the Regimental Association becomes aware of a welfare case, the Association Secretary or a local Regimental Association Branch can also make an appropriate referral. SSAFA has a network of ninety local Branches throughout the UK and abroad, nineteen of which are in Scotland, and a caseworker will be tasked by the local SSAFA Branch to investigate the reported case.
7. Once a SSAFA Branch caseworker has been allocated to the case, the client will be contacted as soon as possible to arrange a meeting with a nominated volunteer

case worker. The caseworker will arrange to visit the client to collate all relevant information about the application. If pandemic or other restrictions are in-force, then the meeting will be conducted over the telephone or by similar means.

8. During the meeting, the following information will be sought by the SSAFA caseworker:
 - **Verification of Service.** Service charities will rarely proceed with a case unless proof of service is provided. Discharge papers are the ideal way to prove service but other evidence such as an Armed Forces Pension statement on headed paper could be used. If proof of service is unavailable, then a formal application would need to be made to the Army Personnel Centre, Glasgow (APC) to verify the client's service. This step inevitably leads to a delay in the application while the APC processes the enquiry.
 - **Financial Circumstances.** The SSAFA caseworker will record details of all the client's income and expenditure, including any outstanding liabilities and debts. This information will give the Welfare Officer at RHQ SCOTS an idea of whether the applicant is able to contribute towards any requests for support. It could also indicate whether the applicant might be eligible to apply for state benefits and therefore be referred by the caseworker to an appropriate local agency for a benefits assessment. Many service charities additionally may ask an applicant for copies of recent bank statements or, if applicable, benefit statements.
 - **Background Report.** The caseworker will write a full background report based on the information collated about the client. It will include details about the applicant's health, the person's living environment, any support the person may need, and the resources the client has at his/her disposal. The report, together with any recommendations will be sent to the Welfare Officer at RHQ SCOTS, and possibly relevant partner charities, to decide on whether to pledge assistance or not (Army Benevolent Fund, Poppy Scotland etc.). A SSAFA background report is always written in response to applications for assistance to be given to Association members or their family member(s). They are confidential and will only be seen by the relevant service charity being asked to pledge funds.

Signposting and Referrals

9. SSAFA case workers can often identify other problems during a case visit and are able to signpost or refer the client to partner organisations for further advice or support (e.g. Combat Stress or Veterans 1st Point for issues with mental health, the Armed Services Advice Project or the Citizens Advice Bureau for advice about debt management and benefits, or perhaps the Veterans Champion on the local Council for housing advice).

Almonisation

10. Almonisation is the process of requesting charitable funds. It is the usual practice for Service benevolent and charitable trusts to share costs. When a background report is sent to the Welfare Officer at RHQ SCOTS, it may also be sent to other partner charities (e.g. Poppy Scotland). If children are involved, Forces Children

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Scotland may be approached. If estimated costs are particularly high, the Welfare Officer at RHQ SCOTS may also invite the Army Benevolent Fund to contribute to the case.

11. Once a decision is made to pledge assistance, the funds are transferred by the service charities to the Treasurer of the local SSAFA Branch, who will arrange to pay for any agreed goods or services. It is extremely rare for applicants to be given cash in hand.
12. It is important to note that any of the charities can decide to decline to help if the requests do not meet their particular criteria for benevolence.

Urgent Cases

13. To save time in urgent cases, applications for assistance should be requested from the nearest SSAFA Branch without delay. SSAFA is generally able to deal quickly with urgent cases, for example: an applicant may be supplied with a one-off food voucher where there is evidence that there is no food in the house, or where there are children involved. Details of how to find the nearest branch can be found at the end of this instruction.
14. An urgent case may also come to the attention of an Association Branch Chairman, which in his view necessitates an immediate payment to a beneficiary in order to provide timely support (e.g. purchase of food or provision of heating). Such exceptional grants can be paid from Association Branch funds. The Regimental Association will reimburse the branch up to £100 per case on condition that the branch ensures that the case has also been reported to SSAFA for follow-up.

Confidentiality

15. All cases processed through SSAFA or the Welfare Officer at RHQ SCOTS are confidential and therefore everyone in the Association must treat any application for assistance as a confidential matter and avoid any embarrassment to the Association member or their family. Any breach of confidentiality might also deter future applicants from coming forward.

Useful Contacts

SSAFA Forcesline – 0800 260 6767 www.ssafa.org.uk (this is a UK national telephone helpline and is manned during normal working hours)

SSAFA Scottish Support Office – 0141 488 8552 (for applicants north of the border). This is a central number and is manned during working hours and is therefore the quickest way to get a local caseworker allocated in Scotland.

Your local SSAFA Branch – details available from the SSAFA website on www.ssafa.org.uk

Regimental Association Secretary – 07786 436176 or secretary@cabarfeidh.com

Combat Stress – 24-hour confidential advice and peer support for veterans with mental health conditions, their families, and carers – 0800 138 1619 www.combatstress.org.uk