

# Welcome to Scotland

A guide for Service personnel  
and their families in Scotland  
(updated 2024)



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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# Foreword



On behalf of the Scottish Government, it is my pleasure to welcome you and your family to Scotland. Going back through history, Scotland has always had close ties to the Armed Forces community and we are immensely proud of our military heritage.

The Armed Forces community is a true asset to our country and I am passionate about championing your interests and ensuring that we deliver the best possible level of care and support to service families during your time here and deliver the aims of the Armed Forces Covenant.

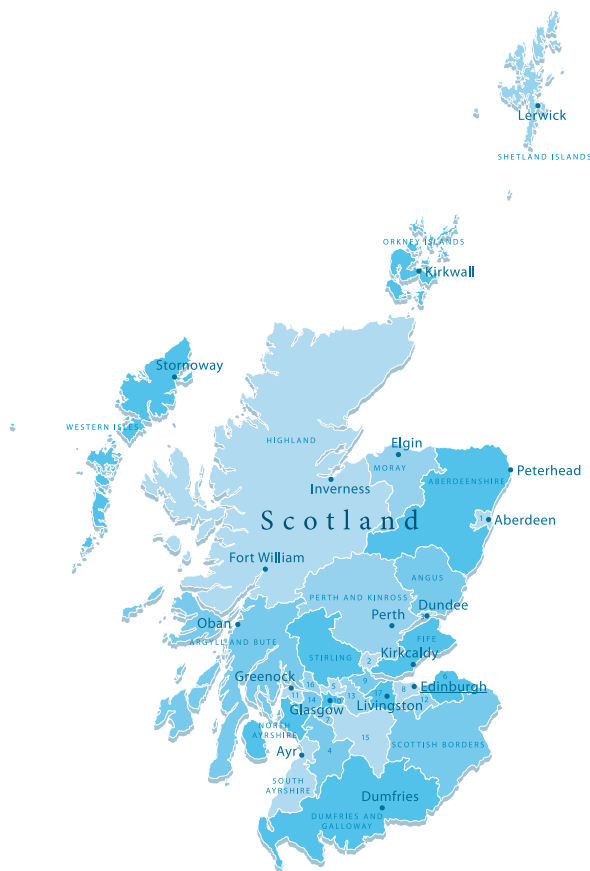
Here in Scotland we recognise the importance of ensuring close integration between the Armed Forces and local communities. This booklet has been designed specifically to help support you with your move and provides practical information on key topics such as housing, education, healthcare and employment.

I hope you will find it helpful and that you and your family enjoy the many benefits that our beautiful country has to offer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graeme Dey'.

**Graeme Dey**  
Minister for Veterans

# Welcome to Scotland



Scotland is a progressive nation built on dynamism, creativity and the fabulous warmth of its people. We have a population of around 5.4 million mostly concentrated in the central belt. Our major cities include Edinburgh, the capital, with its iconic hill-top castle, and Glasgow, famed for its vibrant cultural scene.

## Language

Scotland's official languages are English, Gaelic, and Scots. Around 60,000 people speak Gaelic and more than a million people speak Scots. There are six standalone Gaelic schools including in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and Gaelic is taught in over 50 other schools across Scotland. More information on Gaelic and Scots culture can be found at the [Visit Scotland Website](#).

## Government

The Scottish Parliament deals with devolved issues. Devolution is a system of government which allows decisions to be made at a more local level. In the UK there are several examples of devolved government including the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Parliament, and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Scottish Parliament, informally referred to as “Holyrood”, is a democratically elected body comprising 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). The Scottish Government is led by the First Minister and is responsible for implementing laws and policy in Scotland which are not explicitly reserved to the United Kingdom Government (such as defence and foreign policy). These devolved matters include health and social care, education, justice and policing, rural affairs, economic development and transport. Your MSP represents you on devolved issues and your Member of Parliament (MP) represents you on reserved issues.

Local government is organised through 32 unitary authorities designated as councils which consist of councillors elected every five years by registered voters in each of the council areas. The Armed Forces Covenant has been signed by all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland, along with their local strategic partners in the NHS and the third sector. You can find the contact details for your local authority at [COSLA](#).

# Housing



In Scotland, in addition to Service Family Accommodation and Single Living Accommodation, there are a number of housing options available depending on where you would like to live.

## Housing Options Scotland

The Scottish Government supports Housing Options Scotland to provide its Military Matters Project. This service provides support to veterans, currently serving personnel, their families and dependants to find the right home in the right place throughout the country. For more information visit the [Housing Options Scotland website](#).

## Defence Transition Services

The Defence Transition Services (DTS) team is the MOD's tri-service focal point to provide service personnel and their families with civilian housing information for those wishing to move to civilian accommodation at any time in their career, and for those during resettlement to assist with the transition to civilian life. More information can be found on the [gov.uk](#) website.

## Buying a Home

If you wish to buy a home but cannot afford the total cost, the Scottish Government might be able to help you.

The Forces Help to Buy Scheme enables Service personnel to borrow up to 50% of their salary (to a maximum of £25,000) to buy their first home, or to move to another property on assignment or as their families' needs change. More information can be found on the [gov.uk](#) website.

The Scottish Government have support available to help you buy a home if you can't afford to do so yourself. The Low Cost Initiative for First Time Buyers (LIFT) which includes the Open Market Shared Equity Scheme (OMSE) and the New Supply Shared Equity Scheme (NSSE) is available to first-time buyers and priority access groups. You can find out more about them here.

Funding for these schemes is provided by the Scottish Government. More information can be found on the [mygov.scot](#) website.

## Land and Buildings Transaction Tax

If you purchase property over a certain value in Scotland, you will pay Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT). The tax is payable at different rates on each portion of the purchase price within specified tax bands. There are some LBTT reliefs in place, including a relief for first-time buyers.

Personnel who already own a property anywhere else in the world should also be aware of the LBTT Additional Dwelling Supplement (ADS). The ADS is payable on the total purchase price of an additional dwelling if the consideration paid for the property is £40,000 or more. It applies where:

- one or more buyers purchase a dwelling in Scotland, and
- at the end of the effective date of that transaction the buyer, or buyers, own more than one dwelling, and
- they are not replacing their only or main residence following the purchase of the additional dwelling.

The ADS can subsequently be reclaimed where a previous main residence is disposed of; however, there are particular timelines and rules in place which must be met for the ADS to be repaid.

LBTT is administered by Revenue Scotland; more information can be found on the [Revenue Scotland](#) website.

## Renting a Property

You may wish to rent a property from a private landlord or apply for housing from a social landlord, either a local council or housing association.

If you want to rent a home privately there are steps you should follow. For example, before you move into a property, you should sign a tenancy agreement which sets out the terms of your tenancy. You'll usually pay the first month's rent and the deposit on the day you move into the property - your deposit must then be lodged in a tenancy deposit scheme. This means that when you leave the property your deposit will be returned in full if the property is left in good condition and all rent and bills have been paid. When there is a dispute about the return of a deposit each of the three approved tenancy deposit schemes in Scotland provide access to a free dispute resolution process.

All landlords and letting agents operating in Scotland must be registered. This ensures that the landlord or letting agent is a fit and proper person to let property. It is always important to check if they are registered before considering renting a property.

To find out if a landlord is registered you can search the landlord register by visiting the [gov.scot](#) website.



To find out if a letting agent is registered you can search the letting agent register by visiting the [gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot) website.

Please see the [gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot) website for further information on renting from a private landlord.

In the social sector you can apply for housing if you are over 16. Housing is allocated based on individual housing need. You will usually have to join a waiting list and you are not guaranteed to get a property. Your length of time on the waiting list will depend on the area you wish to live in, the type and size of house you require, the availability of housing in the area, as well as any priority you may have. You can find a list of social housing landlords on the [Scottish Housing Regulator](https://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk) website.

Comprehensive information for tenants about private renting in Scotland can be found in the '[Private residential tenancies: tenant's guide](#)'.

Housing associations and many local councils provide homes for social rent. When you apply for a social rented home, your housing needs will be checked and your application will be held on a housing list. Social landlords decide who is offered housing based on an applicant's housing need and in line with the landlord's allocation policy. You can find information about how to apply for social housing from local councils. Alternatively, you can apply directly to a housing association - the Scottish Housing Regulator maintains the public register of all Registered Social Landlords in Scotland.

For more information about renting a home in Scotland please visit the [mygov.scot](https://www.mygov.scot) website.

## Council Tax

You will usually have to pay council tax, payable to your local council, if you're 18 or over and own or rent a home. If you rent, check your rental agreement to see who is responsible for council tax payments.

Your council tax band determines how much council tax you pay. You can find out the council tax band of your home by looking at the property online via the [Scottish Assessors](https://www.scottishassessors.gov.uk) website.

Armed forces personnel and their families may benefit from a 50% council tax discount where their home is left empty because their professional duties require them to live elsewhere.

For more information on council tax and to learn about council tax in your local authority you can visit the [mygov.scot](https://www.mygov.scot) website.

## Contribution In Lieu Of Council Tax (CILOCT)

All families living in Service Family Accommodation (SFA) or Service personnel in Single Living Accommodation (SLA) pay CILOCT instead of council tax. CILOCT is collected by the MOD and then paid to councils dependent on how many SFA/SLA are in their area. More information can be found via Families Federations websites.

## Universal Credit

The Scottish Government offers people living in Scotland, and in receipt of the UK Government Universal Credit (UC), the choice to have the housing costs in their UC award paid direct to their landlord if renting privately.

An information leaflet for people applying for, or in receipt of UC, is on the [Scottish Government website](#).

# Education



Scotland's schools are welcoming places where we want all children to achieve their potential. Education in Scotland is organised differently to the rest of the UK. This section will help you understand you and your children's entitlements in Scotland's schools.

You can find further information regarding school education in Scotland on our [Parentzone](#) website.

### Forces Children's Education

[Forces Children's Education](#) includes lots of information about the Scottish education system and the geography and education resources available, along with a guide on understanding the Scottish education system. Their guide to understanding the Scottish Education System can be accessed on the [Forces Children's Education](#) website.

Other charities, such as [Govan Law Centre](#), [Children in Scotland](#) and [Children 1st](#) also offer support for Service children. Further information can be found on their websites linked above.

### Early Years Learning and Childcare

The Scottish Government and Local Authorities fund early learning and childcare. This means that it is free of charge for eligible children.

Currently, if your child is three or four years old, you can get up to 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare a year.

Some two year olds can also get the same amount of funded early learning and childcare depending on whether you meet certain eligibility criteria, which you can find on the [mygov.scot](#) website. Once your child qualifies for early learning and childcare, they will stay eligible.

You can get funded hours for different types of registered early learning and childcare, such as a nursery (local authority or privately run), childminder or playgroup. Contact your local authority to find out more about the sessions and providers available to you and to find out how to apply.

You can find out more information at [www.parentclub.scot/elc](http://www.parentclub.scot/elc).

### MOD Wraparound Childcare (WAC)

The MOD Wraparound Childcare (WAC) Allowance can support eligible Service families with children aged 4-11 years old (4-16 years old if in receipt of disability benefits) who attend full-time school in the UK (including home education). If eligible, Service personnel can claim up to 20 hours per week of funding for each child that is attending before and after school care during term time.

WAC is known as School Age Childcare in Scotland. Parent(s) can choose their own Care Inspectorate, (or equivalent), registered childcare provider. More information and the eligibility criteria can be found on the [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) website.

Further information on School Age Childcare in Scotland can be found on the [Parent Club](http://Parent Club website) website.

## School Age and Stages

Scotland provides free school education for all children from the age of around four and a half years old, up to the age of 18. Depending on when their birthday falls, some children can start before they are four and a half. Scotland has different enrolment and school entry dates than other parts of the UK. A summary of the age ranges in Scottish Education can be found on the third page of the [Forces Children's Education guide](http://Forces Children's Education guide) to understanding the Scottish Education System.

Parents are entitled to apply to the local authority either for early entry to primary school, or deferred entry. Forces Children's Education have developed a resource with more information on this should you wish to know more, this can be accessed on the [Forces Children's Education](http://Forces Children's Education website) website.

Children start in Primary 1 and move up to the next class each year through to Primary 7. All children in Primaries 1-5 receive free school meals.

Children move up to secondary school automatically after primary school (aged 11 or 12 depending on when they started school), starting in Secondary 1 and moving up to the next class each year through to Secondary 6.

Your local council is responsible for providing school education in the area you live. You can find full information on applying for all school places and placing requests in '[Choosing a school - a guide for parents](http://Choosing a school - a guide for parents)' and through the Forces Children's Education [resource](http://resource) which helps locate schools in catchment areas of bases across Scotland. In Scotland, the term "Academy" is another name for a high school or secondary school and there are no grammar schools (i.e. selective state schools) even though some schools are called "grammar schools".

When considering your child's education you are encouraged to contact the headteacher of your local school, to arrange a visit and discuss any issue which is a concern to you or about which you would welcome more information.

## Term Time

Term dates will vary depending on your local authority area. You can find term dates on the [mygov.scot](http://mygov.scot) website.

## What Will My Child Learn?

Schools in Scotland plan their curriculum guided by Curriculum for Excellence: Scotland's 3-18 Curriculum. This seeks to educate the "whole child" so that they can achieve their potential through being successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

The secondary school curriculum has two phases – the broad general education in years one to three and the senior phase in years four to six. The Senior Phase allows for children to make choices about the courses they study.

Children and young people have a variety of opportunities to learn and develop skills, giving them the best chance of success in further learning, life and work.

Schools, in collaboration with colleges and employers, have the flexibility to offer a range of experiences to meet the needs of all learners. Young people can also study a range of qualifications and awards, including Nationals, Highers, Advanced Highers, Foundation Apprenticeships and Skills for Work courses.

Further information on the qualifications and how they compare with qualifications across the rest of the UK can be found on the [Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\) website here](#) and on the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\) website here](#).

A parent-friendly guide to Curriculum for Excellence has been produced by the [National Parent Forum for Scotland \(NPFS\)](#). An Armed Forces Families specific resource was developed in partnership with NPFS and can be found on the [Forces Children's Education website](#).

## GIRFEC

Our ambition is to work together with children, young people, families, organisations and communities to make Scotland the best place to grow up. "Getting it right for every child" (GIRFEC) is Scotland's approach to providing all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time, so that every child and young person can reach their full potential.

Through "getting it right for every child", everyone can work together to build the scaffold of support children and young people need to grow up loved, safe and respected. "Getting it right for every child" provides a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people, for the many services and agencies that work with children and families to take a co-ordinated, holistic approach which puts the rights of the child or young person at the heart of decision making.

“Getting it right for every child” values and principles were developed together with stakeholders:

- placing the child or young person and their family at the heart, and promoting choice, with full participation in decisions that affect them
- working together with families to enable a rights-respecting, strengths-based inclusive approach
- understanding wellbeing as being about all areas of life including family, community and society
- valuing difference and ensuring everyone is treated fairly
- considering and addressing inequalities
- providing support for children, young people and families when they need it, until things get better, to help them to reach their full potential
- everyone working together in local areas and across Scotland to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Based on these principles, “getting it right for every child” is about enhancing the wellbeing of all children and young people as well as building a flexible scaffold of support; where it is needed, for as long as it is needed. This is delivered through the core components of:

- the offer of a named person (or equivalent role); someone who acts as a clear point of contact for children, young people and families to go to for initial support and advice. A named person can also connect families to a wider network of support and services.
- a shared and holistic understanding of wellbeing and a single model of how this can be considered and supported; and,
- a single, shared and rights-based approach to planning for children and young people’s wellbeing where support across services is needed, co-ordinated by a lead professional.

More information can be found on the [Scottish Government’s website](#).

## Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child’s safety and wellbeing, these should be reported to the child’s local authority social work department. The contact details for the relevant local authority can be found on the [Care Information Scotland website](#).

If you are worried that a child or young person is at risk of harm, including abuse or neglect, you should also contact the police by dialing 101 in the first instance, or 999 if you think a child is in immediate danger. You do not need to be sure that they have been harmed – it is completely appropriate to report a suspicion.

## Support for Service Children

In the first instance, discuss your child's needs with the school, including any formal support plans (like a EHCP) previously in place. They will be best placed to provide information and support for your child. If you do not know which school your child will attend, you can check catchments based on your posting on the [Forces Children's Education](#) website.

Additional Support for Learning (ASL) in Scotland looks at children's needs in a different way to the systems found elsewhere in the UK. You can be assured, however, that education authorities have a statutory duty both to assess and meet any additional support needs that your child has.

Additional Support Needs (ASN) are broadly defined, including those which might impact on children from Armed Forces families, such as transitions, interrupted learning and dealing with separation and loss. They can be of short- or long-term duration and occur for a variety of reasons. ASN in Scotland includes needs defined as SEND in England.

We also have a Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, where you will find useful information about when your child might be entitled to extra support. This can be found at [Moving to Scotland - Enquire](#).

The Education Advisory Team (EAT) also provide support and assistance to families moving schools for a child with additional needs. More information can be found on the [gov.uk](#) website.

## Careers Advice in School

Skills Development Scotland is Scotland's Career Service. They support young people from the P7/S1 transition stage right through their school journey, including at key decision times such as options choices. They offer one-to-one discussions, group work sessions and drop-ins.

This unique national school support is available to all young people in Scotland, with more intensive support offered to young people with additional support or learning needs, service children and those who are care experienced. More information can be found on the [Skills Development Scotland website](#).

## Independent Schools

As well as local authority education, parents may consider enrolling their child in an independent school. All independent schools in Scotland are registered, with their details available on the [gov.scot](#) website.

The independent sector includes boarding schools, where children and young people stay at the school, either full-time or perhaps only for part of the week.



Where a school provides boarding, it is registered with, and inspected by, the Care Inspectorate. You can find out more about the Care Inspectorate on their website at <https://www.careinspectorate.com/>.

Boarding schools in Scotland differ, and may offer the Curriculum for Excellence or another curriculum. However, all independent schools are inspected by Education Scotland in the same way that local authority schools are. If you are considering enrolling your child at an independent boarding school, you are encouraged to make contact with the schools you are interested in, seeking a copy of the school's prospectus in order that you can be better informed about what each school offers.

The Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS) are a useful source for more general information on independent schools. SCIS is a charitable body which represents most of Scotland's independent schools. You can visit the Scottish Council of Independent School website for more information.

## Parental and Learner Involvement

As a parent, you are entitled to be involved in the life and work of the school and to be engaged in your child's learning. When your child joins a school in Scotland, you automatically become a member of the school's "parent forum". As a member of the school's parent forum you can also join the school's Parent Council which is a way for parents to have a formal role in influencing the life and work of the school.

Schools also have arrangements in place to gather learners' views throughout their education, via pupil councils or other methods.

## Further Education

Further education includes courses that are below the Higher National Certificate (HNC) level. These courses are taught in either secondary school or colleges and include:

- Academic courses below HNC level.
- Courses that do not lead to formal qualifications e.g. independent living skills.
- Courses on basic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy skills.
- Work-related courses, such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications.

To understand qualifications, recognise the levels of learning and to plan your learning journey, further information can be found using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), accessible via this link: Support for Individuals | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (scqf.org.uk).

Colleges are responsible for assessing an individual's criteria for funding, you should therefore enquire within your chosen college. Further information can also be found on the Student Information Scotland website.

## Higher Education

Higher Education in Scotland includes courses of study which are at a HNC level or above. Individuals can take these courses at college or university and there is no age limit. Higher education courses range from:

- HNC
- Higher National Diploma (HND)
- Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)
- Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE)
- Undergraduate Ordinary Degree
- Undergraduate Honours Degree

If individuals are students in Higher Education, they may be entitled to financial support from our Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS).

You and your family are entitled to support from SAAS if you were ordinarily resident in Scotland before you enlisted to the services or meet the ordinary residency criteria.

If you are not entitled to support from SAAS you will still be able to access support from your home UK funding body, if you meet the appropriate eligibility criteria.

You can find more information on Higher Education funding for members of the Armed Forces and their families on the [SAAS](#) website or by calling SAAS direct on 0300 555 0505.

You may also wish to contact your relevant Service Families Federation for more information and advice on eligibility. Non-UK veterans, service personnel and their families from all Services can contact the Army Families Federation or Navy Families Federation's Qualified immigration advisors on [fcsupport@aff.org.uk](mailto:fcsupport@aff.org.uk) or [immigration@nff.org.uk](mailto:immigration@nff.org.uk) for advice on applying for student support.

## Community Learning and Development (CLD) and Adult Learning

CLD supports primarily disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and individuals of all ages to engage in learning, with a focus on bringing about change in their lives and communities. Community Learning and Development includes:

- youth work, family learning and other early intervention work with children, young people and families,
- community-based adult learning, including adult literacies and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL),
- learning for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the community, for example, people with disabilities, care leavers or offenders,
- community development (building the capacity of communities to meet their own needs, engaging with, and influencing decision-makers),
- volunteer development, and
- learning support and guidance in the community.

If you want to find out more about community learning and development activities, contact your local authority. More information on CLD can also be found at [Community Learning and Development \(CLD\) | Sector | Learning in Scotland | Education Scotland](#).

# Healthcare



Healthcare in Scotland is provided by Scotland's public health service, NHSScotland.

NHSScotland consists of 14 regional NHS Boards who are responsible for the protection and improvement of their population's health and for the delivery of frontline healthcare services. You can find more information on [NHSScotland](#) on their website.

## Access to Healthcare

When settled in a place of residence in Scotland you and your family should register with a local doctor – a GP (General Practitioner). Your GP will be able to care for your health conditions and to provide treatment if you become unwell. Any prescriptions prescribed by your GP are free of charge. You can find more information on the [NHS inform](#) website.

Members of the UK Armed Forces and family members should have any previous NHS waiting times taken into account when moving to a new location, including to Scotland. The expectation is that treatment in your new location will be met within the waiting time standards and Treatment Time Guarantee, and according to clinical need.

You will need to register and inform your new General Practice that you need to be re-referred rather than a new referral. It is important you find out where you are on the list before your move.

## Connecting Communities

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) is a third sector organisation which helps connect people with local sources of support that will enable them to manage their own health conditions more effectively. Please visit the [ALISS](#) website for further information.

## Registering with a Dentist

You and your family can get care, advice and treatment from NHSScotland to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy. Scotland also provides free dental checks. You can find a dentist near you using the links at [Dental treatment - NHS Scotland | NHS inform](#).

## NHS Eye Care

Scotland is the only country in the UK to provide free universal NHS-funded eye examinations. These are available to anyone ordinarily resident in the UK and to eligible overseas visitors. In some cases, the NHS will also give an optical voucher towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses. Please visit the [NHS inform](#) website for further details.

## Waiting Well

You may be put on a waiting list to see a healthcare specialist or to get health and social care services. [NHS Scotland](#) have developed a website with information to support your health and wellbeing at this time.

## Mental Health

NHSScotland provides mental health services that offer a range of treatments and self-help advice for those experiencing mild, moderate or more complex mental health problems.

The first point of call for accessing NHS care is usually your GP. You can discuss any issue with your GP who can also arrange referral to more specialist services if that is necessary. You can find more details regarding support and services on the [NHS Inform](#) website.

Other helpful services and resources are included below.

## Breathing Space

Breathing Space offers free and confidential advice for people experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety, whatever the cause. They can be contacted on 0800 83 85 87, 6pm to 2am Monday to Thursday and 6pm Friday through the weekend to 6am Monday. Calls to Breathing Space are free from landlines and from mobile networks. You can access more information on the [Breathing Space](#) website, which provides a wide range of information and advice about coping with low mood, depression and anxiety.

## Health in Mind

Health in Mind provides a pathway of services to support you with a range of mental health problems including anxiety, depression and the impact of trauma. More information on support and services available can be found on the [Health in Mind website](#).

## Mind to Mind

Mind to Mind provides practical resources and advice for anyone struggling with stress, anxiety and low mood or having trouble sleeping, managing debt or dealing with grief. More information can be found on the [NHS Inform website](#).

## Togetherall

Togetherall works with the MOD and the NHS to deliver support services for all serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families 16+. They are experienced in supporting the Armed Forces, veterans and the wider military community with a range of issues including stress, anxiety, depression, stress, PTSD, family & relationships, alcoholism, bereavement and adjusting to civilian life after the Armed Forces. Further information is available on the [Togetherall website](#).

## Forces Family Support

Forces Family Support provide assistance to the Armed Forces Community affected by addiction issues. They offer a helpline which is contactable at [0300 222 5747](tel:03002225747) every day from 9am to 9pm, group sessions support, one-to-one support and counselling. Further information can be found on the [Forces Family Support website](#).

## The Ripple Pond

The Ripple Pond solely supports the adult family members of physically or psychologically injured British Forces personnel and veterans. They offer online member peer support forums, specialist subject talks, workshops and events, virtual member meet ups, onward signposting and referrals and specialist one-to-one support. Further information and contact details are available on [The Ripple Pond website](#).

## Youngminds

Youngminds is the UK's leading charity fighting for children and young people's mental health. They offer support to young people, parents and those working with young people. Information and support is available on the [Youngminds website](#).

## V1P

Across Scotland, the Veterans First Point (V1P) centres provide a one-stop shop – easy access support service for veterans and their families in Scotland. Support is focused on practical issues (financial, employment, housing), as well as on mental health and wellbeing (social drop-ins, wellbeing programmes, therapy). More information is available on the [V1P website](#).

V1P Centres are run by the NHS and staffed by veteran peer support workers and therapists who understand military life and veterans. Centres can be found in Lothian, Fife, Tayside, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and the Borders. To find out more or to access support call 0131 220 9920 or email [veterans.enquiries@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:veterans.enquiries@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk).

## Combat Stress

Combat Stress provides a range of community, outpatient and residential mental health services to veterans with complex mental health problems. Combat Stress also offer a 24-hour helpline for serving personnel and their families.

The helpline is available all day, 365 days a year and provides free, confidential advice for veterans and carers, service personnel and their families. The [Combat Stress](http://www.combatstress.org.uk) website contains a broad range of Self Help Resources.

Website: [www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk)

Helpline Phone: 0800 1381619

Text: 07537 173683

Email: [helpline@combatstress.org.uk](mailto:helpline@combatstress.org.uk)

## Support and Social Care

The Scottish Government is working in partnership with service users, carers, Local Authorities, NHSScotland, Integration Authorities, the Care Inspectorate and the voluntary and independent sectors to integrate health and social care services across Scotland. You can find all information in relation to Scotland's social care at the [NHS Inform](http://www.nhs.uk) website.

## NHS Champions

Each NHS Board has a Armed Forces and Veterans' Champion, who has volunteered to support veterans in their area who may have health-related concerns or issues.

Find your local NHS Champion on the [Veterans Assist Scotland](http://www.veteransassist.scot.nhs.uk) website.

## Sexual Health/Family Planning Clinics

NHSScotland provides free sexual health services in Scotland. You can access professional and non-judgmental care on all family planning conception information, relationships and sexual health advice at [Sexual Health Scotland](http://www.sexualhealthscotland.org.uk) or you can also visit your local GP.

## Parent Club Scotland

Parent Club offers up-to-date guidance from the Scottish Government on your child's health and education. It's full of hints and tips from other parents and carers who've been there before. It also has advice to help you look after your own wellbeing and to point you in the direction of the support available.



## Scotland's Baby Box

Every baby born and living in Scotland is entitled to a Baby Box. This is an opt-in scheme, and expectant parents register to receive their box via their midwife, at approximately 20 weeks.

Further information on Scotland's Baby Box can be found via the Scottish Government's [Parent Club](#) website, or via your health professional.

## In an Emergency

NHS 24 is Scotland's telephone service providing health advice 24 hours a day. The telephone service allows people who feel unwell or those caring for them to obtain health advice if it is not possible to wait until they can visit their GP when the practice is next open. You can call them on 111 if you are ill or need any health services. Alternatively you can also access their website at [NHS 24](#).

The advice line is not intended as a substitute for obtaining an emergency ambulance service. For all life-threatening emergencies you should still call 999.

You will find more information on all health-related topics including dental care, smoking, alcohol, food and nutrition and mental wellbeing on NHS Inform's website at [NHS Inform](#).

# Employment and Training



There are a number of ways to find work in Scotland and below is a list of the support services that we provide to help you in securing employment.

### Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

SDS is Scotland's career service. Their career information, advice and guidance service helps people of all ages to understand the world of work and develop lifelong career management skills. They can help you with career choices, job search, CVs and applications, apprenticeships, funding information and redundancy advice. Their qualified career guidance and advice experts deliver confidential and impartial career services through a network of high street career centres as well as offering career information, advice and guidance over the phone on their dedicated freephone helpline (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm - 0800 917 8000) and online at Scotland's [My World of Work](#) website.

You can also find details of your closest SDS career centre on the [My World of Work](#) website.

You can also access specific and dedicated information and assistance for Armed Forces veterans and leavers on the [Skills Development Scotland](#) website.

### No One Left Behind

No One Left Behind supports those transitioning out of military services and their families, to deliver a local place-based approach to facilitate easier alignment of employability support with existing local level support services. Employability support is aligned with other support services including housing, health, justice and advice services to ensure that individuals can access the holistic packages of support that they need to move towards, into and to sustain employment. Individuals are assigned a key worker who will identify support needs and ensure they receive the right support at the right time.

No One Left Behind is delivered locally through Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) who have responsibility for, and ensure provision meets with local labour market and demographic needs.

You can find more information and contact details for your Local Authority on the [Employability in Scotland](#) website.

### Fair Start Scotland

Referrals to Fair Start Scotland will cease at the end of March 2024. Anyone who has joined and remains on the service by that point will continue to receive full employability support delivered by Fair Start Scotland providers. All new referrals will be supported by No One Left Behind local services from April 2024 onwards.

## Going Forward into Employment

Going Forward into Employment (GFIE) is a scheme which provides civil service employment to specified groups with exemptions, by allowing suitably qualified people to be offered posts without having to compete in the usual way.

The Scottish Government is proud to participate in the GFIE programme that supports military veterans who have left service within the last 5 years or who have left service within the last 10 years seriously injured, as well as spouses or partners of either those veterans or currently serving personnel (your current partner must still be serving or must have been discharged within the last 12 months).

Roles are initially offered on a temporary basis for up to 23 months and may potentially be converted to permanent after 12 months, subject to the individual passing an assessment for a permanent role.

Scottish Government GFIE roles will be posted to Forces Families Jobs. For more information on the GFIE scheme please email [help@forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk](mailto:help@forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk).

## Working in Your Local Area

You can apply to work for your local council across a wide range of job roles and services. Visit My Job Scotland to view, search and apply for jobs in your area [here](#).

Jobcentre Plus helps people to find and progress in work, including those who are unemployed and claiming benefits. Visit your nearest Jobcentre Plus for help with finding a job and information on any benefits you and your family might be entitled to, or visit the [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) website.

You can find further information surrounding the support services available [here](#).

Non-UK veterans, service personnel and family members from all Services having issues proving their right to work due to their immigration status should contact the Army Families Federation or Navy Families Federation's qualified immigration advisors on [fcsupport@aff.org.uk](mailto:fcsupport@aff.org.uk) or [immigration@nff.org.uk](mailto:immigration@nff.org.uk).

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are work-based learning opportunities or jobs with industry-recognised qualifications. Apprenticeship jobs provide people with the chance to work, learn and earn to get the skills employers want.

There are three types of Scottish Apprenticeships: **Foundation**, **Modern** and **Graduate**:

- **Foundation Apprenticeships** are work-based learning opportunities for senior-phase secondary school pupils. Lasting one or two years, pupils can begin their Foundation Apprenticeship in S5 or S6. Young people spend time out of school at college or with a local employer enabling them to complete the Foundation Apprenticeship alongside their other subjects like National 5s and Highers. Completion leads to a qualification at the same level of learning as a Higher. Foundation Apprenticeships are recognised as entry qualifications by all Scottish Colleges and universities.
- **Modern Apprenticeships** are jobs for people over 16 who have left school. This type of apprenticeship enables you to get paid, whilst learning on the job. You get the experience you need whilst working towards an accredited qualification which is recognised by industry with the support of a training provider who works with the business.
- **Graduate Apprenticeships** are jobs for those who are over 16 and provide work-based learning opportunities up to master's degree level for new and existing employees. The apprenticeships combine academic knowledge with skills development to enable participants to become more effective and productive in the workplace.

## Forces Families Jobs

Forces Families Jobs is the tri-Service Families Federations' online employment and training platform for family members of currently serving UK military personnel. Forces Families Jobs connects families with employers and organisations who are Forces family friendly. To find out more, look for jobs, career advice and training opportunities, visit [www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk](http://www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk).

## Volunteering

There are thousands of charities across Scotland who are looking for volunteers to get involved and make a difference. If you would like help to volunteer or to find organisations in your area please get in touch with your local Third Sector Interface (TSI) / Volunteer Centre who will be happy to offer you advice about volunteering. They are in each area of Scotland: one for each local authority. Find your local TSI details here or search for volunteering opportunities on the [Volunteering Scotland](#) website.

## NHS Scotland Careers

NHS Scotland provide recruitment support for veterans and spouses and partners of Armed Forces personnel. Their website includes information on available opportunities, the recruitment process and how to apply, and can be accessed on the [NHS Careers](#) website.

# Benefits and Social Care



We have lots of help available for accessing benefits and social care in Scotland. More information about some of the support services is below.

### Social Security Scotland

Social Security Scotland is an agency of the Scottish Government. They are responsible for the delivery of some low income, disability and carer benefits. Social Security Scotland currently delivers 14 benefits including Adult Disability Payment; Scottish Child Payment; Best Start Grants; and Winter Heating Payment. You can find out more about what benefits are delivered by Social Security Scotland on the [Social Security Scotland](#) website.

Non-UK veterans, service personnel and their families from all Services can access advice from the Army Families Federation or Navy Families Federation's foreign and commonwealth team on eligibility for benefits on discharge and following relationship breakdown. Contact Army Families Federation or Navy Families Federation's qualified immigration advisors on [fcsupport@aff.org.uk](mailto:fcsupport@aff.org.uk) or [immigration@nff.org.uk](mailto:immigration@nff.org.uk).

### Local Delivery Service

Social Security Scotland offer a Local Delivery Service across every local authority area in Scotland. Staff are available to answer queries about Social Security Scotland benefits, help complete paper, telephone or online applications forms, and offer other support. You can request a telephone conversation, an online video call, or a face-to-face appointment at a location that would be convenient. You can find out more information about the support provided here.

### Your Local Council

Many local councils have welfare rights advisers who can help you with problems surrounding benefits or your eligibility. You can find your local council by typing in your postcode on the [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) website.

### Citizens Advice Scotland

You can find information on benefits and other issues like housing, debt and employment on the [Citizens Advice Scotland](#) website or 0808 800 9060. You can also request a meeting with a representative of Citizen's Advice Scotland.

### Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP)

ASAP also provides dedicated information, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces Community in Scotland. The service is provided by the Scottish Citizens Advice Bureau Service, more information can be found on the [ASAP](#) website.

## Turn 2 Us

Turn 2 Us provides support if you are suffering financial hardship. You can find information on the [Turn 2 Us website](#).

## Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

DWP is responsible for most welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. They deal with the administration of some working age, disability and ill-health benefits.

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, the DWP has initiatives that help current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families access Jobcentre Plus services. This includes having an Armed Forces champion in every Jobcentre Plus district who ensures that DWP provide support that meets the needs of the Armed Forces Community. See more information on the DWP and the Armed Forces on the [gov.uk](#) website.

You will find further information on the [Scottish Government's website](#).

## Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment

Child Disability Payment, the Scottish replacement for Child Disability Living Allowance (DLA), launched nationally in Scotland in November 2021. This payment is designed to mitigate some of the additional costs of caring for a child, or young person with a disability or terminal illness. You can find more information about Child Disability Payment on the [mygov.scot](#) website.

Adult Disability Payment, the Scottish replacement for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), launched across Scotland in August 2022. Adult Disability Payment provides support to people who have a disability or long-term health condition. You can find more information about Adult Disability Payment on the [mygov.scot](#) website.

Both Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment are non means-tested, non-taxed, will rise with inflation and are a passport to other types of support, such as a Blue Badge, Housing Benefit, Carer's Allowance, Universal Credit and exemption from the benefit cap.



# Other Useful Information



## Elections and Scottish Parliament

You can find out who your local MSP, MP and Councillor is by entering your postcode on the [Write to Them](#) website.

Serving personnel, along with their spouses or partners, can take part in elections and referendums. You can find out more information about how you can register to vote in Scotland on the [mygov.scot](#) website.

## Local Authority Champions

All Local Authorities within Scotland have nominated an Armed Forces and Veterans Champion who acts as an advocate on behalf of the Armed Forces Community within that area. The Champions are in place to support the Armed Forces Community to identify any issues which need to be addressed and resolved. As well as this numerous other Organisations, including NHS Boards and other statutory bodies have also nominated Armed Forces and Veterans Champions.

You can find more information on who your Local Authority Champion is on [Veterans Assist Scotland](#) website.

## Scots Law

Scots law is the legal system in Scotland, and although elements in the Scottish legal system are similar to those in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, there are important differences between Scots law, English law and Northern Irish law. You can find out more about Scots law on the [Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service \(Scotland's prosecution service\)](#) website.

In Scotland, the criminal law can be different to that of the rest of the UK. For example, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation in 2019 that made all forms of physical punishment of a child unlawful. More information can be found [here](#).

The civil law, including family law, may also be different in Scotland to the position elsewhere in the UK.

## Taxes in Scotland

Similar to a majority of countries around the world, tax plays an important role in Scotland because it helps to pay for the public services we use.

There are three different types of tax in Scotland:

- Local taxes, which are managed and collected by your local authority area. An example of a local tax you might pay is Council Tax.
- Devolved taxes, which are taxes either fully or partially controlled by the Scottish Government. These are either collected by Revenue Scotland or Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Examples of devolved taxes you might pay are Scottish Income Tax and Land and Buildings Transaction Tax.
- Reserved taxes, these are controlled by the UK Government and collected by HMRC. Examples of reserved taxes you might pay are National Insurance and VAT.

Each year, the Scottish Government announces its plans for tax and spending in the Scottish Budget. Devolved taxes make up a large part of the Scottish Government's revenue for this, with more than 40% of what Scotland spends coming from these taxes. More information on the purpose and principles of tax and how the Scottish Government makes decisions on devolved taxes is set out in the Framework for Tax.

Income Tax, which is a tax on money you earn, is the largest of the taxes the Scottish Government controls. Scotland has its own rates and bands which are different from the rest of the UK, which you will pay as a resident of Scotland. Your tax code will begin with the letter 'S' if you pay the Scottish rate. HMRC is responsible for the collection of Income Tax in Scotland.

The revenue raised from taxation in Scotland supports the most comprehensive range of free to access public services available in the UK, including free prescriptions and tuition fees.

The Scottish Income Tax Mitigation scheme is applicable for those posted in Scotland, and ensures eligible MoD staff pay the same amount of tax regardless of where they live. It applies only to personnel based in Scotland who are liable to pay more Income Tax in Scotland than they would had they been based elsewhere in the UK. It is a policy created by the UK Government and Ministry of Defence, and is therefore not a policy that is devolved to the Scottish Parliament. You can find out more information on this scheme, including eligibility [here](#).

# Supporting You



The Scottish Government greatly values and supports our Armed Forces personnel, veterans and families and recognises the contribution they make to their communities. We have a great network of organisations in Scotland, which can help and support serving personnel and their families. For example:

### Forces Children Scotland

Forces Children Scotland help children and young people from serving, reservist and veteran families across Scotland grow in confidence, develop new skills and gain valuable experiences by co-producing projects and services to support mental health and wellbeing, education and learning and putting their unique experiences on the radar of civilian audiences.

Support across these areas can be found on [Forces Children Scotland's](#) website.

### Forces Children's Education

Forces Children's Education is a website which provides clear and accurate information for education professionals and Armed Forces families in Scotland. The Scottish Government, Local Authorities and schools are working hard to ensure that moving to Scotland has a positive effect on the educational outcomes of children from Armed Forces families. This website has been created in order to bring all these efforts together and put the resources that parents and the education professionals who support their children need, together in one place.

Resources and support can be accessed on the [Forces Children's Education](#) website.

### HIVE

On behalf of the Chain of Command Army HIVE delivers information support for the whole military community on a wide variety of topics affecting your everyday Service and personal life, including relocation, accommodation, health and wellbeing, childcare and education, employment, finance, deployment, resettlement, and the local area.

The service is free and available wherever you are in the world. HIVE staff can research information on your behalf and are also able to provide confidential signposting to further sources of support. If you're considering overseas postings or already at post, the iHIVE (International HIVE) also provides location-specific guides and information.

If you're Service Personnel, a partner or wider family member, veteran or MOD civilian, HIVE support is available face-to-face through a worldwide network of Information Centres and also online. Find out more via their website and social media:

[www.army.mod.uk/hives](http://www.army.mod.uk/hives)

[www.twitter.com/ArmyHIVEinfo](https://www.twitter.com/ArmyHIVEinfo)

[www.facebook.com/ArmyHIVE](https://www.facebook.com/ArmyHIVE)

[www.instagram.com/ArmyHIVEinfo/](https://www.instagram.com/ArmyHIVEinfo/)

## Families Federations

There are three Families Federations representing each of the three services, Navy, Army and RAF. Each of the Family Federations is independent from the services and works to improve the quality of life for Service families around the world - on any aspect that is affected by the military lifestyle.

They also provide a signposting service to help you find the right person to speak to, as well as providing useful information for Service families.

The Army Families Federation and Navy Families Federation also employ qualified immigration advisors who provide free and confidential advice and support on every aspect of the immigration journey for serving personnel, veterans and family members.

More information on the individual Families Federations can be found via:

### **Naval Families Federation**

Phone: 023 9265 4374

Website: <https://nff.org.uk/>

### **Army Families Federation**

Phone: 01264 554004

Website: <https://aff.org.uk/>

### **RAF Families Federation**

Phone: 01780 781650

Website: [www.raf-ff.org.uk/](http://www.raf-ff.org.uk/)

## Other Support

### **Veterans Scotland**

Address: New Haig House, Logie Green Rd, Edinburgh EH7 4HR  
Phone: 0131 550 1569  
Website: <http://www.veteransscotland.co.uk/>

### **Legion Scotland**

Address: New Haig House, Logie Green Road, Edinburgh EH7 4HQ  
Phone: 0131 550 1583  
Website: [www.legionscotland.org.uk](http://www.legionscotland.org.uk)

### **PoppyScotland**

Address: New Haig House, Edinburgh EH7 4HQ  
Phone: 0131 557 2782  
Website: [www.poppyscotland.org.uk/](http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk/)

### **Glasgow Helping Heroes**

Address: 840-860 Govan Road, Glasgow G51 3UU  
Phone: 0141 276 7199  
Website: [www.ssafa.org.uk/get-help/glasgow-helping-heroes](http://www.ssafa.org.uk/get-help/glasgow-helping-heroes)

### **Armed Forces Covenant**

Website: [www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk](http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk)

### **Support in Mind Scotland**

Address: 6 Newington Business Centre,  
Dalkeith Road Mews, Edinburgh EH16 5GA  
Phone: 0300 323 1545  
Website: [Mental Health & Money Advice service - Health and Well-being \(nhsinform.scot\)](http://nhsinform.scot)

### **SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity**

Phone: 0131 557 1697  
Website: [www.ssafa.org.uk/](http://www.ssafa.org.uk/)

### **Armed Service Advice Project (ASAP)**

Phone: 0808 800 1007  
Website: [www.adviceasap.org.uk/](http://www.adviceasap.org.uk/)

### **Shelter Scotland**

Address: Scotiabank House, 6 South Charlotte Street, Edinburgh EH2 4AW  
Phone: 0808 800 4444  
Website: <https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/>

### **Shared Parenting Scotland – Armed Forces and Veterans Support**

Address: 10 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5AA  
Phone: 0131 557 2440  
Website: [www.sharedparenting.scot/veterans-support/](http://www.sharedparenting.scot/veterans-support/)



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