

# Supporting our Veterans

An impact report on the Scottish Veterans Fund



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# Foreword

**The Scottish Veterans Fund is currently in its twelfth year. Unsurprisingly, it has evolved considerably since its inception, growing from an annual fund of £80,000 in 2008 to £200,000 in each of the last three years, thanks to the Scottish Government's partnership with Standard Life Aberdeen.**

There has however, been one constant throughout that period - the quality of the projects which have benefited from it. I have been lucky to have the opportunity to visit many of these and see first-hand the difference that is being made to the lives of veterans in areas like wellbeing, housing and employment.

I am pleased to say that the Scottish Government, supported by the input of Standard Life Aberdeen and the administration of the fund by Veterans Scotland, has been able to help a range of organisations improve their offerings, or grow new capabilities to support our veterans community across Scotland.

As Veterans Minister, I commissioned this report not just to highlight the great work that is being done by the organisations which have received funding, but to hopefully stimulate discussions on what form future support needs to take, building on our recent consultation on *The Strategy for Our Veterans*.

The Scottish Government remains committed to supporting our veterans community in Scotland, and we recognise that working in partnership is key to this. I therefore want to end by thanking Standard Life Aberdeen, Veterans Scotland and all of the organisations and individuals whose efforts have delivered such important support for veterans and their families.



**Mr Graeme Dey MSP**  
**Minister for Parliamentary**  
**Business and Veterans**



**As signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant and holders of the Gold Award from the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme, we take our commitment to our Armed Forces very seriously at Standard Life Aberdeen. As part of that commitment we have been keen to increase awareness of the strengths and requirements of the Armed Forces community and to recognise the value that they bring to society.**

Like most large organisations these days, we have our share of staff members who have served in the Regular Forces or who are still serving as members of the Reserve. We have been keen to share our experience with other organisations on how best to capitalise on what we see as a very capable and reliable source of talent.

We are also aware that there are some in the Armed Forces community who are in need of a little more assistance. We were delighted to be able to partner with the Scottish Government to support the growth of the Scottish Veterans Fund, with the money we provide being used on projects that help the military community with employability focused schemes.

As fund contributors, we were also more than happy to offer resource to assist with the collation of this report. I hope you enjoy this report as it highlights the impact being delivered to our military community across Scotland by some amazing organisations.



**Keith Skeoch**  
**Chief Executive,**  
**Standard Life Aberdeen plc**

# What is the Scottish Veterans Fund?

The Scottish Veterans Fund was established by the Scottish Government in 2008. Since its inception it has allocated more than £1.4 million to over 150 projects across Scotland. The projects provide advice, help and support to veterans and their families.

In 2017, the Scottish Government partnered with Standard Life Aberdeen who made a three year contribution to the Scottish Veterans Fund. At the same time, the fund changed from accepting only single year bids to also supporting multi-year projects across the three years.

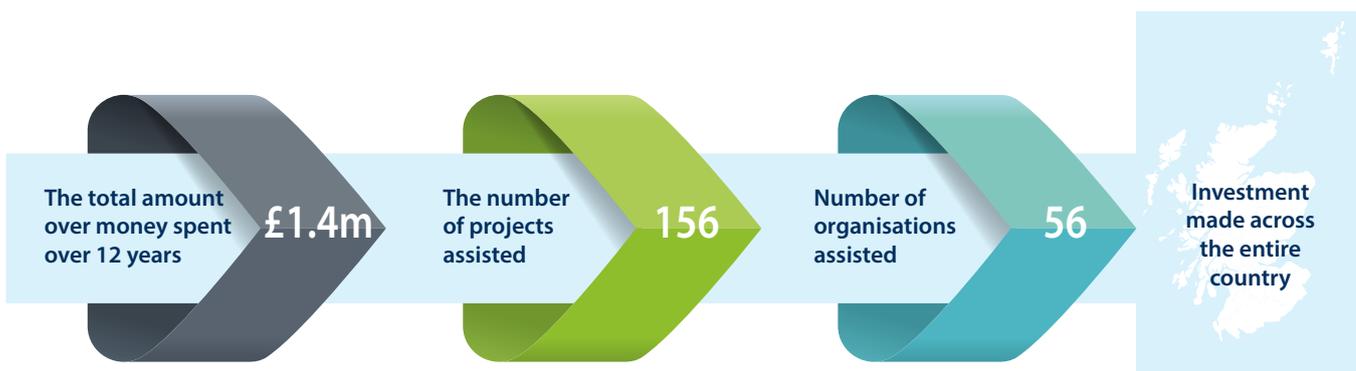
Since 2017 the annual fund has therefore comprised £120,000 from the Scottish Government and £80,000 from Standard Life Aberdeen, providing a total of £200,000 per annum to allocate to projects. The Scottish Government funding has focused on supporting veterans' wellbeing, social inclusion, and raising public awareness of veterans issues.

Standard Life Aberdeen's funding is dedicated to supporting employment of veterans and their families.

Standard Life Aberdeen also offer support to successful applicants to help maximise the social impact of their projects.



The Scottish Veterans Fund is administered by Veterans Scotland, who handle the applications and distribution of funds on behalf of the Scottish Government and Standard Life Aberdeen.



The Fund is aimed especially at projects that are attempting to deliver new or innovative approaches to veterans' issues, or to develop areas that are currently not supported by the Scottish or UK Governments.

The Scottish Veterans Fund stipulates that one or more of the following criteria is required when projects apply for funding:

- To promote **physical and mental health and wellbeing** of veterans
- To assist veterans to secure better access to adequate **housing**
- To combat **loneliness and isolation**, and promote **comradeship**
- To support **successful transition** to civilian life following Service
- To help veterans **access services** provided by the public or voluntary sectors
- To **raise awareness** of veterans' issues amongst the general public
- To deliver greater understanding of the issues faced by veterans through new **research**
- To assist veterans facing additional **barriers to employment**
- To **promote best practice** transitions to employment
- To assist **wider spousal/family employment**, supporting veterans to transition effectively.



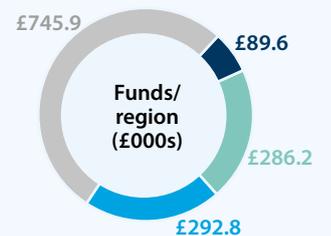
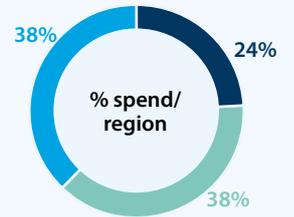
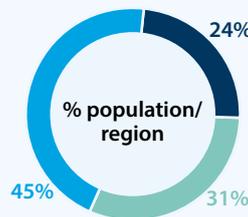
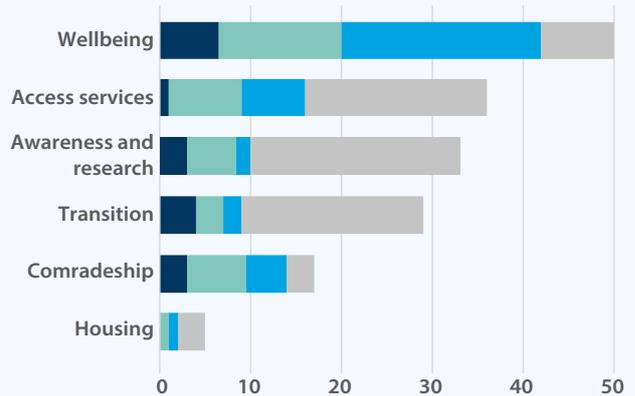
# Breakdown of funding and projects 2008 - 2020

## Geographical split

- Highland Scotland
- East Scotland
- West Scotland
- Scotland Wide



Number of projects 2008 – 2020

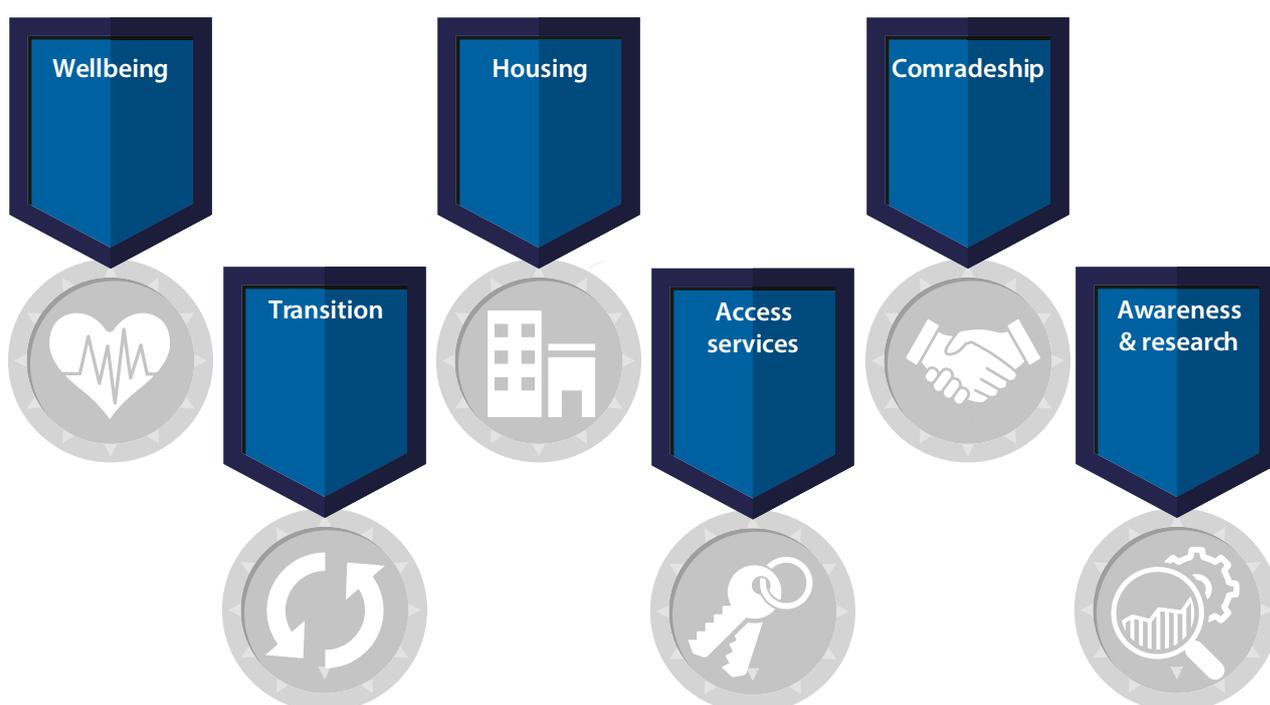


# Aims of the report

This report aims to tell the story of those organisations that have received support from the Scottish Veterans Fund, and the excellent work that they are doing as a result.

During the lifetime of the Scottish Veterans Fund support has been given across a number of themes – described in this report as **wellbeing, comradeship, transition, access services, awareness and research, and housing**<sup>1</sup>. Projects that support employability outcomes are spread throughout these themes, predominantly within transition.

The main focus of this report is on the projects supported in 2018 – 2019 as these projects both have the most readily available recent data and also bring to life the current aims of the Scottish Veterans Fund. Due to the nature of the projects funded in that year, the case studies in the following sections fall within the themes of **wellbeing, comradeship, transition, and access services**.



<sup>1</sup> There is some cross over where some projects cater for a number of the criteria stated above. Where this is the case a lead category has been assigned for statistical purposes.

# The projects 2018 - 2019

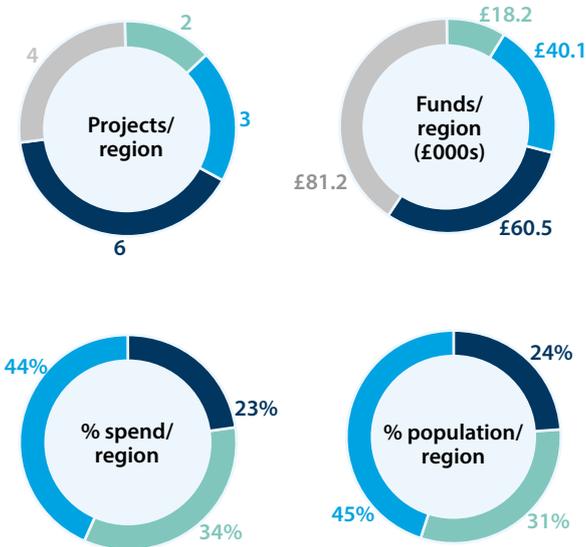




# Overview

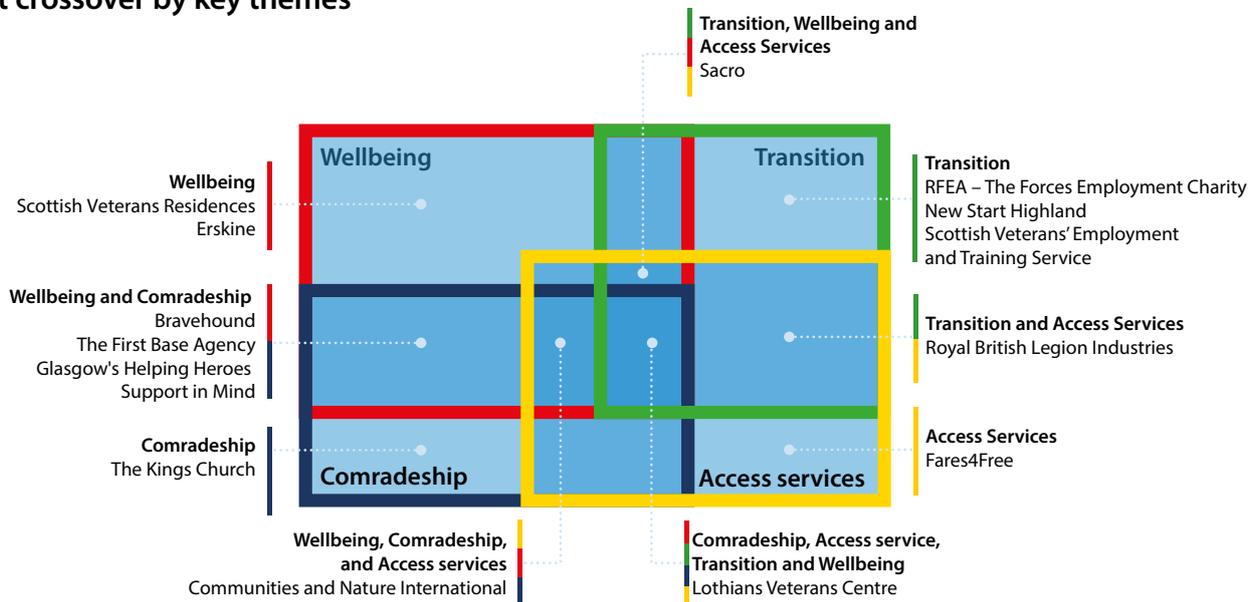
The Scottish Veterans Fund grants in 2018-2019 enabled 1,400 opportunities to benefit veterans and their families. Projects followed a similar pattern to that of previous years, with the largest proportion of projects aimed at physical and mental health and wellbeing, although there has also been support for transition, accessing services and camaraderie. Recipients have shown evidence of significant collaboration and crossover, either by providing access to each other's services, or referring their clients to each other where they don't have the necessary expertise.

## Where the money has been spent



Project locations	Project locations
<b>Highland</b>	<b>West</b>
Communities and Nature International	Glasgow's Helping Heroes
New Start Highland	Bravehound
<b>East</b>	Royal British Legion Industries
Lothians Veterans Centre	The First Base Agency
Support in Mind	The Kings Church
<b>East/West</b>	<b>Scotland wide</b>
Erskine	Fares4Free
Scottish Veterans Residences	RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity
	Sacro
	Scottish Veterans' Employment and Training Service

## Project crossover by key themes





Total granted in  
2018-19  
**£62,880**

# Wellbeing



The nine wellbeing projects in 2018-2019 cover a wide range of activities. Our funding helped support the translation of letters for retired Gurkhas in The Gurkha Centre in Aberdeen and provide a specialist Dementia Nurse Consultant to train staff at Erskine's care homes. It also supported horticultural therapy, yoga retreats, cooking skills and football coaching qualifications.

## Erskine

Erskine is one of Scotland's leading veterans' charities. They provide residential care in four homes and applied to the Scottish Veterans Fund to help pay for the employment of a Dementia Nurse Consultant to improve the quality of care they offer. This included increasing the knowledge, skills and expertise of their staff by training them to Enhanced and Expert Level on the Promoting Excellence Framework.

"Our Dementia Nurse Consultant, Janice McAlister, has had a major impact since coming to work at Erskine in 2017. Janice is supporting staff across the organisation, making them more confident and competent practitioners, which of course supports us in reaching our ultimate goal of delivering excellence in care for our residents. The invaluable support of the Scottish Veterans Fund has been key to helping us achieve this goal, enabling us to develop our learning and also share that learning within and beyond Erskine. We are hugely grateful for the financial support received – it really has made a difference to the delivery of care services at Erskine and improved the way in which we can support our veterans and their families." Derek Barron, Director of Care at Erskine.

Erskine

Grant £15,000



**"It was really powerful to take part in the Age Simulation training and walk in our residents' shoes for a short period of time. It improved my understanding of some of the daily challenges faced by our residents and why they might display certain behaviours. I want to think more about what lies behind some of the distressed and sometimes challenging behaviour we deal with, and learn more about how I can respond and help our residents."**

The view of a member of staff after the training

## Support in Mind

The Veterans Community Café is based in the Stafford Centre, on Broughton Street in Edinburgh, and is a project run by Sadaya in partnership with Support in Mind Scotland. The café opens every Wednesday evening from 6-9pm and offers food, chat, Tai Chi and meditation. A grant from the Fund has allowed them to employ a part-time liaison officer who has been able to run and further develop the café.



“What I found right from the beginning was comradeship. Everyone in the group had either served in HM Forces, was currently serving or the spouse of a veteran/serving person. However, apart from the obvious, there was another invisible thread connecting all of us: that of having at one time struggled or currently struggling with our mental health. This was the main reason we were there, to find support with these struggles in the form of mindfulness.”

Lou O'Connell, Mindfulness Retreat attendee



Support in Mind

Grant £14,483

Total granted in  
2018-19  
**£45,524**



# Transition

The majority of those leaving the Armed forces make a successful transition into civilian life. For a minority of Service Leavers, a greater level of support may be required which is why we have supported a variety of projects which assist with transition.

In 2018-2019 six projects have been supported, delivering a mix of mainstream advice through training and onwards to sustainable employment.

## Sacro

Sacro is a Scottish community justice organisation which works to create safer and more cohesive communities across Scotland.

One of the services they offer is the Veterans Employability Service that supports veterans in custody in Scottish prisons. Since Sacro have been receiving funding from the Scottish Veterans Fund, they have been able to provide a one-to-one peer support employment service for veterans on short term prison sentences. This has allowed them to increase their coverage from three to six prisons and support 36 veterans.

The following is an abridged version of a case study: **Veteran B was referred to Sacro's Veteran Employability Service (VES) after he requested assistance to address his skills gap. Veteran B disclosed that he had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by the prison doctor, but that his application to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) had been declined as any diagnosis of PTSD was required to be made by a consultant.**

**Sacro's VES mentor obtained approval from the Scottish Prison Service for Veteran B to be assessed by a medical consultant from Veterans' First Point who diagnosed him with combat related PTSD caused by military service in Afghanistan. Agreement was reached to contact Veterans UK/ AFCS to further discuss compensation. Veteran B was granted an extension to his case and consequently awarded approximately £6,000 to assist in his recovery and in recognition of the trauma sustained from his military service. Veteran B has been referred to Sacro's Veteran Mentoring Service to assist with his housing needs and to the Regular Forces Employment Agency to address his employment skills gap. Sacro's support to Veteran B will continue training and onwards to sustainable employment.**



Sacro

Grant £29,682

### Royal British Legion Industries

The mission of Royal British Legion Industries' Scotland's Bravest Manufacturing Company (SBMC) is to enable veterans and others with disabilities to regain their independence through personal development. This primarily involves employment and skills while providing a professional and high quality product.

The grant from the Fund has been used to employ a Veteran Welfare Support Manager to work with the veterans who work with SBMC. The veterans community at SBMC comprises a mixture of paid employees, unpaid work placements, and some volunteers. The Veteran Welfare Support Manager assists them in a wide variety of areas, from mental and physical health, alcohol and substance misuse through to helping them find long term sustainable employment.

One veteran responded to a question about the additional benefits he has seen while working with SBMC:

**“Working in a completely supportive environment. As much as it is good to work with fellow veterans, it is also highly beneficial to work with civilians who are passionate about getting veterans back into work. It’s taken me from a place where I felt worthless to having a sense of purpose. It has been a turning point for me.”**



Total granted in  
2018-19  
£72,876



# Access services

In 2018-19 there were five projects providing access to services, for example by helping the veterans community get to medical appointments or social activities or by providing advice and guidance with benefits, housing and health related issues. Across the project reports there has been a real theme of collaboration between partners, in particular other Scottish Veterans Fund supported projects.

## Lothians Veterans Centre

The Lothians Veterans Centre (LVC) provides a wide range of services including support and guidance on a range of issues, social and sporting activities, and a drop in centre where they run a bacon roll morning every Friday. A grant from the Scottish Veterans Fund allowed them to establish new pop up cafés for veterans from across the Lothians in order to improve their social inclusion, health, and wellbeing.



Eric Smith is in his 80s and is a LVC regular, visiting the centre several times a week by bus from his home in Colinton. Eric has received extensive support from the LVC and partner organisations with housing and benefits advice and with repair and maintenance of his home. The LVC have recently worked with Legion Scotland to find Eric a regular befriender to visit him at home.

## Fares 4 Free

Fares 4 Free (F4F) is a charity that engages taxi drivers and taxi companies to give free fares to help veterans and their families access essential services and combat social isolation.

Since receiving funding from the Scottish Veterans Fund to employ an additional part-time Operations Co-ordinator, F4F have increased the number of taxi companies they work with from 19 to 33, therefore being able to cover the vast majority of Scotland. During 2018-19 they helped over 284 veterans, made 2,410 trips, drove 34,000 miles and saved veterans or service charities £62,000 in taxi fares.

The service F4F provides is a real enabler for veterans and other service providers alike.



Fares 4 Free

Grant £15,000

**“Fares 4 Free is an invaluable service, not only for the pick-up of clients who are showing concern regarding travel, but also the experienced and gentle assistance F4F provides in reassuring clients while they travel to HorseBack UK.”**

Lynn Artesse, HorseBack UK

**“The veterans themselves have nothing but praise for the service F4F provide, and we are very thankful for it; as are they. It is collaborative efforts like this that help enable more veterans to access help.”**

Andy Smith, Combat Stress (North)

**“The fact that I can call on Fares 4 Free wherever I am throughout Scotland is reassuring, and the professionalism and attention to detail provided by F4F, and any of the taxi firms that are part of the service, is second to none. I would be lost without this service!”**

Gerry McGregor, Help for Heroes

Total granted in  
2018-19  
**£18,000**

# Comradeship



The seven comradeship projects in 2018-19 have provided opportunities for veterans and their families to come together and support each other. As ever, delivery of the services has come in many shapes and forms, from drop in centres and regular breakfast events, to gardens where veterans can work together for the benefit of their community.



## Bravehound



Bravehound

Grant £14,812

Bravehound's main role is the training and provision of companion dogs for veterans with PTSD. However, Bravehound also run horticultural therapy for 30 veterans.

The grant from the Scottish Veterans Fund supported a project which combated loneliness and isolation, raised wider awareness of veteran's issues, and helped veterans develop horticultural skills. Veterans, working alongside volunteers and children from Broxburn Academy, created a garden for the Gardening Scotland Show in 2018. The theme was a Black Watch Soldier returning home from the First World War and the garden was awarded the Silver Gilt Award by the judges.

The show attracted 30,000 visitors, providing a fantastic opportunity for the public to meet the veterans involved, to learn about their service and the benefits the veterans gained from being a part of the project.

One of the veterans said, **"This was the best thing I have ever done, I'm so proud of what we achieved"**.

## Communities and Nature International

Communities and Nature International run The Gurkha Centre (TGC) in Aberdeen that provides a drop in and outreach service for the growing populations of Gurkhas who are settling in the area.

The project set out to hire a Nepali speaking Veteran Support Officer and to produce a Nepali/English pamphlet listing the local resources and amenities.

The service aims to help the Gurkha community integrate with wider community and access local services with confidence by partnering with other organisations.

**"I came to Aberdeen from Nepal but I was not quite sure about the systems and services here including my pension arrangements. The Officers from The Gurkha Centre helped me to understand the systems and services here in the UK and connected me to the agencies including GPs and Gurkha Welfare Trust. With their support I managed to change my addresses and pension details, and all went smoothly afterwards. Many thanks to The Gurkha Centre; we are so lucky having them here at Aberdeen."**

Krishna Tamang, a Gurkha veteran.



Communities and Nature International

Grant £9,217





# The application process



The Scottish Veterans Fund is administered by Veterans Scotland who handle the applications and distribution of funds on behalf of the Scottish Government and Standard Life Aberdeen.

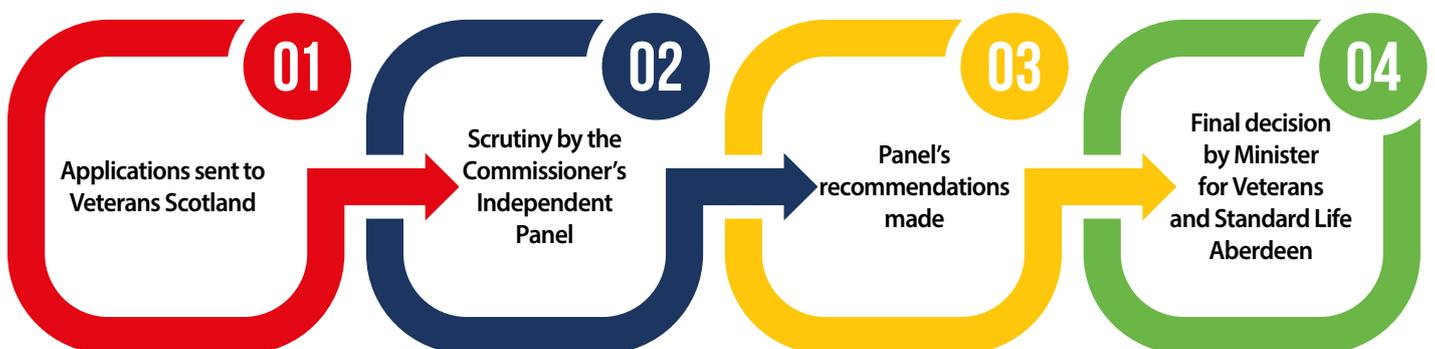
## Eligibility

Applicant organisations must have a presence in Scotland and constitute a “legal person”, meaning it is legally constituted and can enter into a contract in its own right. For example, in respect of the organisations that typically apply to the Scottish Veterans Fund, applicants may be a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), a new legal form for registered Scottish charities, or a registered company. Registered company applicants (whether a limited company or a company limited by guarantee) will typically be not-for-profit and may also have separate charitable status as a registered charity. Statutory bodies are also eligible to apply.

Please note that unincorporated organisations, even where a registered charity, are not eligible to apply. In that event, the Scottish Government recommends that consideration is given to becoming a SCIO or registered company to apply in future.

All applications are reviewed by an independent panel selected and chaired by the Scottish Veterans Commissioner, Col (Retd) Charlie Wallace.

The panel provides recommendations to the Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans and Standard Life Aberdeen for the final decision on which bids are selected for funding.



Grant letters are sent to recipient organisations that explain the reporting structure and what is expected from the recipient organisation.

# Further information

If you require any further information on the Scottish Veterans Fund or think that you have a project that is aimed at providing services for the veterans community in Scotland that meets one or more of the criteria, then please contact the General Secretary of Veterans Scotland who will be happy to provide advice on **0131 550 1590** or **office@veteransscotland.org.uk**

## **Potential partnership?**

If you or your organisation have been inspired by the great work done by the charities that benefit from the Scottish Veterans Fund and you would like to become a funding partner then please contact: **dpu@gov.scot**

# Funding recipients 2017 - 2020

The following table shows which organisations have received money since the partnership between the Scottish Government and Standard Life Aberdeen has been in place.

Organisation	Project types				
	Wellbeing	Comradeship	Transition	Access services	Awareness/ Research
Bravehound	■	■			
Capital City Partnership Ltd			■		
Combat Stress	■				
Communities and Nature International	■	■		■	
Edinburgh Community Yoga Outreach	■				
Erskine	■				
Fares4Free				■	
Glasgow's Helping Heroes	■	■			
HorseBack UK	■				
Lady Haig Poppy Factory					■
Lothians Veterans Centre	■	■	■	■	
Macrobert Arts Centre	■				
New Start Highland			■		
Poppyscotland				■	
RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity			■		
Royal British Legion Industries	■		■	■	
Sacro	■		■	■	
Scottish Veterans Residences	■			■	
Support in Mind	■	■			
The First Base Agency	■	■			
The Kings Church		■			
Thistle Foundation	■				
Scottish Veterans' Employment and Training Service			■		
<b>Yearly totals</b>					

## Note:

1. Where the annual total is less than £200,000 it is a result of money being returned to the fund due to a change in project scope.

\* These individual figures are an amalgamation of smaller projects being run by the same organisation within the same year.

2017 to 2018	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	Total
	£14,812	£15,000	£29,812
£3,300			£3,300
£11,760			£11,760
	£9,217		£9,217
£5,811			£5,811
£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£45,000
	£15,000	£15,000	£30,000
	£5,000	£5,000	£10,000
£7,500			£7,500
£2,000			£2,000
£16,500	£16,500		£33,000
£8,199		£8,579	£16,778
£9,000	£9,000		£18,000
		£7,064	£7,064
£21,661	£22,124	£37,280*	£81,065
	£28,194	£53,794*	£81,988
£39,522	£29,682		£69,204
£2,400	£3,268	£14,400	£20,068
£8,447	£14,483	£14,483	£37,413
£1,340	£1,100		£2,440
£5,200	£1,500		£6,700
£9,899			£9,899
£14,400	£14,400	£14,400	£43,200
<b>£181,939</b>	<b>£199,280</b>	<b>£200,000</b>	<b>£581,219</b>



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