

## We're here for you

We provide life-changing help and support to serving personnel, veterans and their families.

**Visit [rafa.org.uk](https://www.rafa.org.uk)**  
**Call 0800 018 2361**



Patron: His Majesty The King  
Registered Charity 226686 (England & Wales).  
SC037673 (Scotland).

# Contents

## Get specialist advice and support

Casework	4
RAF Families Federation	5
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	6
War Pension Scheme	7
<b>Improve your wellbeing</b>	
Finding it Tough?	8
Navigating Dementia	9
Financial Resilience	10

## Stay connected

RAFA Connections for Life	11
Branches and Clubs	11
Doodle Packs	12
RAF Contact Houses	12

## Access to quality affordable childcare

RAFAKidz	13
<b>Take a break</b>	
Holidays	14
Respite Care	14

## Your retirement

Retirement Living	15
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Every year we help tens of thousands of people to overcome difficulties ranging from physical and mental wellbeing issues to financial struggles, loneliness and isolation.



# Here for you

For more than 90 years, the RAF Association has championed a simple belief – that no member of the RAF community should be left without the support they need and deserve.

Every year, we help thousands of serving personnel, veterans, and their families to lead dignified, fulfilled, and independent lives. Whatever your need, we're here to help.

The support we offer has been created in direct response to the needs of the RAF community. We listen to your experiences and requirements and gather evidence to develop services that make a positive difference. We also know that needs change and, thanks to our research, we're constantly identifying new ways to help those who rely on our support.

We **empower** people to live happily and independently.

**“The progress I’ve made so far wouldn’t have happened if I hadn’t been able to get my car adapted or to get the bathroom sorted. I wouldn’t be back at work in the way I am now. I wouldn’t be in such a good place – I would still be struggling.”**

Matt, former RAF technician, who has been supported by our Casework service (p.4)

We keep our community **connected**.

**“RAFA Connections for Life really does mean that. For me, it’s two people that have become friends. I was so pleased. It restored my faith in humanity.”**

Gerry, a former RAF electrical fitter, who has been supported by our Connections for Life service (p.10)

We help people overcome the challenges of everyday life by building their **resilience**.

**“There were several other serving personnel at the workshop, which took place at the Royal Air Forces Association’s HQ in Leicester. We soon began swapping stories of how caring for relatives with dementia had affected our work, and our lives in general.”**

Squadron Leader Richard, who has been supported by our Navigating Dementia service (p.8)

# Get specialist advice and support

## Casework

Whether you need help finding financial assistance, guidance on accessing specialist care, support with housing or independent living adaptations, our highly trained and knowledgeable casework team are on hand to help every step of the way.

Our network of caseworkers have a wealth of experience in supporting the RAF community. They will understand your needs, help signpost support and explore funding options available to you.

If you're facing financial difficulties, struggling with daily living expenses, bills or debt, our dedicated team can offer expert advice and guidance. You could be eligible for our emergency funding, to help bridge the gap whilst longer-term support is put in place. Your caseworker will also work with you to apply for funding on your behalf from organisations such as the RAF Benevolent Fund and Royal British Legion, making sure you understand the process as it progresses.

We also offer practical help to those facing other challenges. These include arranging support for mobility and independent living adaptations, issues affecting your mental wellbeing, physical disabilities and isolation.

If you're an RAF veteran with one day's service and one day's pay, RAF serving personnel, or their spouse, widow/er, or dependent, you could be eligible for support. Whatever your need, our team understands that every case is individual. They will take the time to listen, explain anything that might feel difficult or overwhelming, and give support as and when you need it.

One of the thousands of people who accessed support from our casework team said:

**“Without your help, I’d have given up a long time ago. Thank you for all you’ve done for me over the last few years. I am really appreciative of the light you have shone in my life at its darkest moments.”**

Find out more at [rafa.org.uk/get-support](https://rafa.org.uk/get-support)

If you need urgent support, contact us on **0800 018 2361**.



## RAF Families Federation

Do you need advice regarding your service accommodation, local authority, access to schooling for your children, or transitioning out of the RAF?

Offering expert and independent advice, the RAF Families Federation can connect you to the right people and guide you to ask the right questions to secure the support you need.

**They can help with a range of issues, including:**

- Helping to resolve problems with your service accommodation
- Supporting you to find school places for your children, and if you have children with special educational needs, ensuring they receive the support they need
- Liaising with local authorities to ensure your family have convenient access to healthcare
- Signposting to welfare organisations if you have health or financial issues
- Providing advice and support for your family if you are being deployed overseas
- Providing guidance and support if you are transitioning out of the RAF

The RAF Families Federation supports all personnel (single, married or in a partnership) and their families.

Find out more at [raf-ff.org.uk](https://raf-ff.org.uk)



In 2023, the RAF Families Federation helped over

**550**

individuals and families with their personal circumstances, including assistance with service accommodation problems, advice on health and financial issues, access to education for children, and helping families plan for overseas deployment.

In 2023, we sourced over

**£3 million**

in funding from grant-giving organisations to support people in the RAF community.





## Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Have you sustained an injury or suffered an illness due to service since 2005? We may be able to help you make a compensation claim.

We offer free, independent and confidential advice for serving personnel and RAF veterans. We can assist with all stages of a claim or appeal and, if you need it, offer representation at tribunal.

To be eligible, you must have sustained an injury or suffered from a medical condition which was due to, or worsened by, your service after 6 April 2005. These claims must be made within seven years of the onset of injury, or in cases of mental health conditions, you first seeking medical advice. They can be claimed while still in service.



Last year we helped individuals access **£1.4 million** through the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

## War Pension Scheme

If your injury or illness was due to, or worsened by, service in the RAF before 2005, you may be eligible to claim through the War Pension Scheme.

If you'd like advice on an existing or potential claim, our team will be happy to help.

The War Pension Scheme is a dedicated service for those who have sustained an injury or suffered from a medical condition which was due to, or has been worsened by, RAF service on or before 5 April 2005. Claims can't be made until after discharge from full-time service.

You don't need to have been in an operational situation to qualify, as most duty and sporting activity would satisfy the test for consideration of an award.



Find out more about both the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and War Pension Scheme at [rafa.org.uk/afcs](http://rafa.org.uk/afcs)

# Improve your wellbeing



## Finding it Tough?

Whether you're a family member of someone serving in the RAF, a veteran, or a member of the community that supports the RAF, we understand that you may need a little help from time to time.

Finding it Tough? is our free mental wellbeing training. Our tailored online and face to face courses will help you tackle some of the challenges faced by you or your loved ones.

Our courses help you to support your friends, family members and colleagues, and will teach you to spot signs that they may be struggling. We'll also provide you with tips, habits, and guidance for managing your own mental wellbeing and resilience.

### Who are the courses for?

- All partners, parents, brothers, sisters, and children (over 18) of anyone serving in the RAF
- All RAF veterans and their families
- Those supporting the RAF community. For example, anyone working on an RAF station (e.g. MOD civil servants and defence contractors), medical staff, civilian staff or volunteers



**“The course was run extremely well. It was engaging and there was plenty of opportunity to be involved in discussions about the course content. It was also a good reminder of what to do for yourself and those you interact with professionally and on a personal level.”**

Finding it Tough? participant

Find out more at [rafa.org.uk/fit](http://rafa.org.uk/fit)

## Navigating Dementia

**We know that the challenges of caring for a loved one with dementia can be particularly difficult from a distance, whether on deployment or living away from family. You're not alone.**

Our Navigating Dementia service provides support and guidance. We understand that caring from a distance can create additional complexities in already difficult circumstances. We can help you identify how and where you can access additional support.

Through our online support hub, we provide up to date information about dementia and the care that is available for your specific needs, whether you are at home or away.

Our accredited face to face courses are tailored to the RAF community and provide a safe and welcoming space to gain a more in-depth understanding of dementia and support networks. This support is available for serving personnel, veterans, and anyone in the RAF community who may be dealing with the challenges associated with dementia.

Find out more at [rafa.org.uk/nd](http://rafa.org.uk/nd)

Last year

**1,500**

people who were struggling to care for someone with dementia accessed help and guidance through our online Navigating Dementia support hub and training courses.

## Financial Resilience

Are you finding it difficult to manage your finances? Are you worried about financial pressures or being able to meet unexpected costs?

We know that the cost of living is a cause for concern and that many in our community are finding it hard to make ends meet, which is why we have partnered with expert financial organisations to provide you with offers and equip you with tools to improve your ability to withstand financial difficulties.

If you're an RAF Association member, our partnership with Trinity offers you access to insurance products specifically designed for the Armed Forces community - from home insurance to protect you from unexpected bills, to life insurance for peace of mind that your financial commitments will be covered if the worst were to happen.

We also work alongside Serve and Protect Credit Union to help our members save money and access essential tools to improve financial resilience.

Find out more at [rafa.org.uk/financialresilience](https://rafa.org.uk/financialresilience)

You can also have your Will written for free through the National Free Wills Network or Bequeathed. Open to anyone looking to write or update their Will, you don't need to be a member to use this service. By setting out your wishes, you can make sure your loved ones are financially provided for after you're gone.

Find out more at [greatestgift.rafa.org.uk](https://greatestgift.rafa.org.uk)



## Stay connected



### RAF Association Connections for Life

If you're isolated from your friends and family, struggling to adapt to life after service, or in need of a listening ear, we can provide a friend when you're feeling alone.

We know that loneliness affects tens of thousands of people in the RAF community every year. If you're someone who's lost touch with your family, community or wider support network, Connections for Life can match you with a friendly volunteer who can bring laughter and companionship into your life again.

Your dedicated volunteer will provide one-to-one, personalised conversation, friendship and support via telephone and through other initiatives. It's a wonderful way to gain confidence, speak with someone who shares your interests and reconnect with the outside world. Connections for Life is open to everyone in the RAF community.

**"I wish to thank my volunteer for her kindness. In recent weeks she has provided a lifeline to me. We have amazing conversations, from garden sheds to my old times at Brize Norton. She is a joy to the ear."**

User of our RAF Association Connections for Life service.

Find out more at [rafa.org.uk/friends](https://rafa.org.uk/friends)



In 2023, we reduced loneliness and isolation by making nearly **20,000** regular friendship calls to 1,300 people through our Connections for Life service.

### RAF Association branches and clubs

Would you like to make connections in your local community? Meet with like-minded people? Or have access to local welfare support?

Our network of branches host thousands of wellbeing activities every year, helping to reduce loneliness and isolation by providing local support.

Working closely with our casework team, our branches can help you if you need more hands-on support. They also offer social events, to help connect you with the RAF community, and our branch clubs provide a safe space to meet others.

With thousands of members across the UK and further afield, our branches, clubs, and members are a fantastic network of support.

Find out more at [membership.rafa.org.uk/branches](https://membership.rafa.org.uk/branches)



Our network of over **65,000** members spans **100** countries and over **200** branches.

## Doodle Packs

Are you worried about maintaining your bond with your children whilst away from home and want to alleviate the stress of separation?

Our Doodle Packs provide serving families with a fun and interesting way to share feelings, thoughts, and experiences even when loved ones are deployed across the world.

Your child or children can create their own special send off or 'welcome home' celebration, decorate a pillowcase, design their own 'we miss you' card, create a scrapbook – and so much more.

Please contact us at [doodlepack@rafa.org.uk](mailto:doodlepack@rafa.org.uk)



More than **600** Doodle Packs are sent out to families, schools, and nurseries across the UK every year.

## Contact Houses

**Having somewhere for loved ones to stay whilst visiting you on station is important.**

We help the RAF to refurbish and maintain contact houses, to ensure you have access to a welcoming and comfortable space to spend time with loved ones and allow you to make the most of every moment of their visit.

Contact Houses are available to serving personnel who would like a space for family to visit in a home environment.

To check contact house availability on station, visit the HIVE or contact your Community Development Officer.



Last year, over **12,500** nights were spent in the 80+ contact houses the RAF Association has supported.

## Access to quality affordable childcare



### RAFAKidz

**Are you looking for high quality, affordable childcare that prioritises learning experiences that are special, unique, and child focused?**

Our nurseries are located across the country on, or close to, RAF and MOD locations. Our longer opening hours and wraparound care provides flexible options for younger and older children that will work for your family.

All our nurseries are OFSTED registered, and we pride ourselves on our commitment to safeguarding and quality assurance.

When your child comes to RAFAKidz, we plan their experience carefully and sensitively, working together with you to understand their individual needs and ensure they learn and develop at their own pace.

Our staff are specifically selected for their loving and attentive nature, as well as their expertise. We understand that the needs of military families can be distinct, and at RAFAKidz we take extra care to make sure those needs are met.

For every child that comes through the doors of RAFAKidz, no matter their ability, background, or circumstances, we will provide experiences and opportunities that help them grow, be confident and reach their potential.

#### Our nurseries provide:

- High quality, affordable childcare
- Expertly trained and attentive practitioners
- Bespoke and exciting outdoor and indoor spaces
- Nutritious and healthy meals
- Quiet sleeping areas
- Funded childcare for eligible children

Places are available for the children of military families and those who support them, as well as families within the local community.



Find out more at [rafakidz.org.uk](http://rafakidz.org.uk)

# Take a break

## Holidays

Whether you're looking for a relaxing break or a family adventure by the beach, we have the perfect affordable holiday destination to suit your needs.

Choose from holiday homes in Norfolk, West Sussex, or East Lothian for one or two week breaks.

We have three beautiful seaside locations available:

**Dunbar Holiday Home**, Dunbar, East Lothian

**Hemsby Holiday Chalets**, Hemsby, Great Yarmouth

**Selsey Holiday Home**, Selsey, Chichester

Our scenic coastal accommodation caters for serving RAF personnel, RAF veterans, their families and partners, and members of the RAF Association.

Find out more at [rafa.org.uk/holidays](http://rafa.org.uk/holidays)

## Respite Care

We understand that life can sometimes be challenging. If you need a short break to recover and relax, it's important that you can stay somewhere welcoming, comfortable, and safe.

We work in partnership with The Moorings, a luxury retirement home in Lytham St Annes, to offer full-board short breaks.

This modern venue stands proudly on the seafront. Many of the spacious, high-quality bedrooms, all with en-suite facilities, offer views overlooking the sea and gardens.

You'll have access to restaurant-style dining, a cinema, salon and an indoor bowling green – so you can choose to relax in luxury at our beautiful beachside location or take advantage of the extensive range of activities on offer.

Please contact us at [wingsholidays@rafa.org.uk](mailto:wingsholidays@rafa.org.uk)



# Your retirement

## Retirement Living

Would you like to spend your retirement living in a beautifully designed and purpose-built home that maintains your independence alongside like-minded individuals who share an RAF connection?

Our retirement accommodation complexes have everything you need on the doorstep, from art galleries and theatres to sunny garden rooms for reading and relaxing.

We have six beautiful complexes situated in four of the UK's most stunning locations.

**Dowding House**, Moffat, Scotland

**Lord Tedder Court**, Rothbury, Northumberland

**Malcolm Court**, Rothbury, Northumberland

We know that maintaining your independence is important, which is why we offer both independent and assisted living accommodation, providing the option for self-sufficiency, or companionship.

Our self-contained flats and suites include a bedroom, bathroom, and sitting areas, along with space for a fridge and microwave.

There's plenty of space to socialise as well. Sit back in one of the tastefully decorated shared lounge areas or take a stroll around the beautifully landscaped gardens.

**Rothbury House**, Rothbury, Northumberland

**Storrington**, West Sussex

**Wexford House**, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire

Our retirement accommodation welcomes RAF veterans, and their partners, widows, or widowers.

Find out more at [rafa.org.uk/retirement](http://rafa.org.uk/retirement)





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