

ON THE RADAR

SUPPORTING FORMER AND SERVING MEMBERS OF THE RAF AND THEIR FAMILIES



ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU IN 2022

Welcome to our latest newsletter, full of information about how we can help you.

Although winter has been challenging, we're looking ahead to spring being well underway.

We're always here to support you, no matter what life sends your way. The RAF Family is the reason we're here, whether you served for days or decades. In this edition, you can find out all about our services to improve your wellbeing.

You can also enjoy a fun quiz and wordsearch and read about our garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show this May.

Whatever you need, just get in touch - we're here ready to help you through any tough times.



CALL: 0300 102 1919



EMAIL: welfare Navigators@rafbf.org.uk



- ✓ EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
- ✓ FRIENDSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS
- ✓ FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

- ✓ INDEPENDENT LIVING
- ✓ FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

@rafbf



OUR WELLBEING SERVICES

It's been a tough couple of years for everyone. We're here for you, with multiple services available to help improve your wellbeing.

We all feel low or lonely sometimes. And that's perfectly normal. But it's important to know what support is available, and to reach out when you need it.

That's where we come in. We have lots of services available to help you feel better mentally and emotionally. From the big challenges to the small changes, we are here for you.

If you're a veteran, or a partner or widow(er) of a veteran, why not try our Telephone Friendship Groups to meet new people? You'll join a call each week where you can chat about your interests with up to five others, plus a trained volunteer to help things run smoothly. Around 300 people took part in 2021 and many told us it helped them feel better connected.

Our Wellbeing Services are also there for serving members of the RAF, veterans and their families. Our therapy sessions can help you with everything from bereavement, anxiety, and depression to low self-esteem, stress, and loneliness.

90% of people who used our Counselling and Wellbeing services in 2021 felt it had a positive impact on them. With our Wellbeing Services, there are options to receive support either virtually from the comfort of your own home, or in-person.

We offer counselling for children and young people, and couples too. 91% of couples who took part in

our relationship counselling last year said it made a positive difference.

Wondering if mindfulness is for you? We also provide free membership of the mindfulness app Headspace to serving RAF personnel, their partners, and anyone receiving counselling through our Wellbeing Services.



Get in touch

All you need to do to start using these services is contact us on 0300 222 5703 or email support@rafbf.org.uk

We're here to support anyone who is serving or has served in the RAF, including those who did National Service, and their immediate family members. For more information about our support and who is eligible visit rafbf.org/help.

Did you know that **one in four people struggle with their mental health every year?**

Our research suggests 170K RAF Family members feel lonely or isolated.

QUIZ

How strong is your RAF knowledge? Take our quiz and see!

1. Which year was the Bomber Command Memorial unveiled?
2. The Lancaster bomber was used in more than 156,000 sorties during the Second World War. How many crew members were required on board?
3. Complete the first verse of the traditional English nursery rhyme and folksong Oranges and Lemons. 'Oranges and lemons, Say the bells of...?'
4. At which RAF station did Tom Cruise film a stunt for Mission: Impossible 5 - Rogue Nation?
5. How many aircraft does the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight operate?

1. 2012 2. Seven 3. St Clement's
4. RAF Wittering 5. 12

"THANK GOODNESS THE FUND TREATED ME SO WELL"

RAF veteran Colin Stegeman tells us how our bereavement counselling and being part of one of our Telephone Friendship Groups helped him rebuild after his wife died.

RAF veteran Colin Stegeman was bereft when his wife Margaret sadly died in June 2020 after a long battle with blood cancer.

"You think you're strong and can take anything. But to have your wife who you love, to have her gradually dying over a long period takes something out of you," says Colin, 85.

Our bereavement counselling through our Wellbeing Services, and Telephone Friendship Groups, have been a lifeline for Colin since Margaret's passing. "The calls are good fun," he says. "It gives me a sense of purpose because I am listening to other people and their problems. Not only do we talk about the RAF, we talk about the everyday situations that we have in our lives."

Colin joined the RAF aged 22 and did two years National Service in the 1950s. "Thank goodness the Fund treated me so well," he said. "I have no worries about accepting their help, because I worked very hard in the RAF."

HELP WITH DAY-TO-DAY LIVING COSTS

With the cost of living rising, we can help you make sure you're receiving the financial support you're entitled to.

From energy bills to food, we know lots of costs are going up just now. If you're struggling, we offer a range of support for members of the RAF Family, to help you live the life you choose – the life you've earned.

We can provide financial support with household essentials, priority bills, and unexpected expenses. For those of pensionable age and on a low income, we may be able to offer regular financial assistance through a quarterly income supplement. We may also be able to help with home care or care home costs.

A grant of up to £10 a week could also be given to people with a disability or to carers to assist towards the cost of maintaining a garden.

If you or someone in your household has a disability and are on a low income, we may be able to provide a grant of up to £20 a week to assist towards the cost of housework or minor DIY tasks. We hope this will enable members of the RAF Family to stay in their home longer and remain independent.

Our friendly Benefits Advisors are also here to help. They can advise on which benefits you can claim, and make sure you're receiving all the money you're entitled to.

Talking to them can make a big difference. In 2021 our advisors supported over 1,500 people, and 83% were able to make a successful benefits claim from the advice they received.

“Talking to our Benefits Advisors can make a big difference.”

There may be a variety of reasons why you might require financial assistance. We don't believe anyone who has served their country should have to struggle through life, and we are here for immediate family members too.

If you'd like to speak to one of our Advisors, call us on 0300 102 1919.

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS OF THE RAF REGIMENT

Share your memories to mark this milestone anniversary.

To honour the RAF Regiment's 80th anniversary, we've launched a dedication page where you can thank, commemorate, and celebrate all those who served and are serving in the RAF Regiment – the ground fighting force of the RAF.

Visit rafbf.org/regimentdedication to share your stories and memories.

WORD SEARCH

W F P E R A R D U A K S
E C R Z Y J R L I S H Q
L H U I J G V A S U B U
L E P G E N W N J P Z A
B L V Q M N L C Q P B D
E S D H U T D A K O R R
I E T M N E K S U R X O
N A I M W R B T H T H N
G H A X F A G E Q I C X
V Y A V H E A R I X P Q
I R A F R E G I M E N T
A L L S T A T I O N S N

RAFREGIMENT
CHELSEA
FRIENDSHIP

ALLSTATIONS
LANCASTER
SQUADRON

PERARDUA
WELLBEING
SUPPORT

Supporting the RAF Regiment.

Fund Ambassador Jacqui Thompson talks about the support we gave her when her husband Gary – a proud member of the RAF Regiment – was killed in action 14 years ago.

“My life and the lives of our five daughters changed forever when I heard the heart-breaking news that Gary had been killed. His vehicle had hit a landmine. Gary was 51.

“The Fund came to our assistance and helped my daughters financially through university.

“Knowing that the Fund was there for us gave me such a sense of assurance for our future.”

“The prompt and unconditional support was the foundation upon which we could begin to rebuild our lives.”

WE'RE GOING TO THE CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW!

For the first time, we'll have a garden at this world-renowned event.

We are very excited to announce that the Fund will unveil its first ever garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show this May.

We are thrilled to be working with multi gold medal winning RHS garden designer and sculptor John Everiss, whose father served in the RAF.

Funding for our garden is being provided by Project Giving Back, a new support scheme enabling charities to create a garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

Visit rafbf.org/chelsea to sign up to our e-newsletter for updates, and look out for blogs on our website with more exciting news.

To read previous editions of this newsletter visit: rafbf.org/ontheradar



Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund