

Blesma

Bulletin Members' Newsletter Winter 2019

Sailing, shooting,
and so much more
Activities round-up [p14](#)

Get what you
are entitled to
Help with benefits [p24](#)



Have fun, get fit

The Fitness and Wellbeing course gets Members moving and motivated. Fancy it?

Inside: Book your place at Members' Weekend 2020 now!



Members visit the National Memorial Arboretum during Seniors' Week

Join them in the Winter issue of Blesma Magazine. Out mid-December

Blesma Bulletin

Winter 2019



Dear Members

A change of author for the introduction of this edition as I stand in as interim Chief Executive. Your Trustees are currently going through the process of finding a worthy successor to Barry Le Grys following his departure from Blesma after five years at the

helm. On your behalf, I would like to extend our best wishes to Barry as he takes up the reins at Motability and thank him sincerely for his excellent work in moving Blesma forward.

There is much in this edition and I do urge you to delve into the detail if you see something that piques your interest. Information that you may find useful is included in the piece on First Group's "Extra Help to Travel" cards, and for those of you without a Will, no matter what age, I commend our free Will writing service to you as something to seriously consider.

One article that is worth a careful read relates to the increasing sophistication of scammers and how they are constantly evolving their techniques to steal from us. As well as raising awareness of the threat, the piece on p28 also looks at some simple precautions you can take

to protect yourself and your family. If we can save one person from the misery caused by scammers that will be time very well spent.

We have reports from Members who have taken part in the increasingly diverse range of activities that Blesma puts on, both as part of the national programme and in local initiatives in the regions prompted by you, the membership. In this issue, these reports include a fitness and wellbeing trial event in Eastern England, Warrior Week in the USA, a Greek sailing regatta, and a family adventure week, amongst others. Twenty five per cent of all recent attendees to Blesma activities are new to the programme, showing clearly that we are continuing to reach a wider audience and connecting more Members.

There is much more content besides, with the usual informative updates on Benefits from Liz Watling – this edition focusing on help with heating costs and how to arrange social care – and Brian Chenier's prosthetics update, which is widened to also include information on personalised care for veterans with a long-term physical, mental or neurological health condition or disability.

Space precludes me from mentioning lots more that is included, but needless to say I hope you will thoroughly enjoy reading all of the Bulletin.

Best wishes

Ian Waller



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A new personalised care approach for veterans

NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), have published *Personalised Care for Veterans in England*, a guide for clinical commissioning groups and local authorities. This document sets out a new personalised care approach for those veterans who have a long-term physical, mental or neurological health condition or disability.

Embedding the six evidence-based components of the NHS Comprehensive Model for Personalised Care, organisations are encouraged to work with the individual to plan and deliver coordinated and personalised care that is considerate of the Armed Forces Covenant and the individual's military experiences.

This is set out in a personalised care plan, which is developed with the individual and a range of organisations, including health and social care, and military charities. Individuals may be eligible for a personal budget to pay for some of the care and support they need.

They should also get more support in the community and be able to access a range of help, such as emotional and practical support from people who have similar health conditions or disabilities. This is in addition to being supported to access



dedicated services for veterans, such as the Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS), the Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS) and the Veterans Trauma Network (VTN). Applications for this personalised care package should be made to an individual's local clinical commissioning group. The NHS website (www.england.nhs.uk) provides details of clinical commissioning groups throughout England.

BENEFITS

Individuals who are eligible to receive this personalised care package will benefit from the following:

- Personalised care and support planning with a range of

- organisations, including health and social care, local commissioners, and Armed Forces charities. This gives them more choice and control over how their care is planned and delivered, taking into account preferences that relate specifically to their military service
- A single integrated personalised care and support plan for all their health and wellbeing needs, including the option of NHS Continuing Health Care, a personal budget, personal health budget or integrated personal budget for all or part of their care. This plan is based on what matters to them, meaning that they can choose how best to live their life and get the right support to make that happen
- Ongoing support and access to community resources to help ensure that they are an active participant in the planning and management of their own health and wellbeing, with outcomes and solutions having meaning and context within their life

For more information on anything covered in this article, email england.armedforceshealth@nhs.net or contact Brian Chenier BSO (Prosthetics) on 020 8548 7080 or at bsoprosthetics@blesma.org If you are experiencing any problems with your prosthetic provision or care, please contact your BSO or BSO (Prosthetics) for individual support and advice

Veterans Trauma Network Wales

Veterans Trauma Network Wales (VTN Wales) exists to ensure that ex-Service personnel who suffered severe injury as a result of their Service can access the most timely and appropriate care.

Recent conflicts have seen unprecedented survival rates. These patients receive comprehensive care and rehabilitation before being discharged from the Armed Forces. Thereafter, they are NHS patients. In some cases, late sequelae of injury or changes in the relationship between the patients' injury and their physical and mental health or social circumstances may mean that further evaluation and/or treatment is appropriate and necessary.

VTN Wales will function, in the first instance, as an advice service, directing patients to appropriate care. Often, patients will be directed to specialists who are linked to the Network. However, referral recommendations will follow established pathways (as determined by geography and need) except where the case is likely to benefit from an opinion or treatment from a different or specialist source.

PATIENTS MUST MEET THE CRITERIA

Inclusion criteria:

- Former member of Her Majesty's Armed Forces, Regular or Reserve
- Sustained service-attributable physical injury or illness
- Currently have unmet needs for the care or assessment of their injuries, or the perception thereof

Exclusion criteria:

- Those who have never served in the Armed Forces
 - Those currently serving in the Armed Forces, as they are supported by Defence Medical Services. Advice about appropriate referral for these patients can, however, be discussed
 - Those whose injuries do not relate to their service in the Armed Forces
 - Those with exclusively mental health problems
 - These patients should be referred to Veterans' NHS Wales. www.veteranswales.co.uk
- VTN Wales will work closely with Veterans' NHS Wales in those cases where a patient has physical and mental health issues. Initial referral can be either or both routes.

Pain leaflet is now available to Members

Blesma's research project *Caring and Coping: A Family Perspective on Living with Limb Loss* has led to the development of a leaflet about pain. The aim of the leaflet is to help Members understand their pain as well as help them communicate with health professionals about the pain they experience.

Although this leaflet was produced following comments and feedback from Members and their families living with limb loss, it deals with pain as a generic issue that can affect anyone. The leaflet was produced with

the assistance of Dr Dominic Aldington, a leading pain specialist who served in both the Regular Army and Reserves. Dr Aldington was also the head of the pain service at Headley Court and currently holds monthly Veterans Pain Clinics at the King Edward VII Hospital in London.



The leaflet is available on the Blesma website. For a hard copy contact Brian Chenier on 020 8548 7080 or at bsoprosthetics@blesma.org



Get a little Extra Help to Travel on the bus

First Group in Bristol, Bath and the West have recently rolled out 'Extra Help to Travel' cards. These are designed to assist anyone who may require a little assistance when boarding a bus.

"We know that for some of our customers, travelling by bus can be a little daunting, so we've been working with many disability groups around the UK to design cards that you can print out and show your driver as a way of discretely asking for a little extra help if you'd rather not ask them out loud," First Group's website says.

"For example, maybe you're a little unsteady on your feet so need time to get to your seat before the driver pulls away, or you lip read so need the driver to face you when they speak. Whatever the help you need, these little cards will either already have an appropriate message for you to use, or you can fill in one of the blank ones with your own request for help.

"Just cut out any cards you want to use and keep them with you when you travel so that you can show them to the driver as you board and they will do all they can to help."

You can print a set of cards at: www.firstgroup.com/bristol-bath-and-west/plan-journey/extra-help-travel

How you can support Blesma at no extra cost

AmazonSmile is a 'giving service' which allows users to donate a small percentage of any purchase to the charitable cause of their choice. Simply log in to www.smile.amazon.co.uk and Amazon donates 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees) of eligible purchases you make back to your chosen charity.

AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. It simply allows its customers to give a little something back. We hope you will remember Blesma the next time you shop online.

Your Will can now be written for free

Blesma has teamed up with the National Free Wills Network to give Members access to a free Will writing service. The partnership will allow individuals and couples who are part of the Blesma family to have their Will(s) written or amended free of charge, using qualified solicitors local to them.

Your Will is a very important way of making sure that the people and causes you care about are looked after once you are gone. There is no pressure to remember Blesma in your Will but, if you choose to leave Blesma a gift, it is a great way to be a part of our future work and support injured veterans without spending a penny today.

The free service applies to the writing of 'Simple Wills', in other words Wills that do not deal with complex issues. The offer also includes 'Mirror Wills' for couples.

To speak to someone at Blesma about the National Free Wills Network, please contact Tony Bloomfield, Blesma's Associate Director of Fundraising on 020 8548 3517 or email legacies@blesma.org



Introducing Sarah Payne

SOUTH WEST OUTREACH OFFICER



Tell us about your work background and how that led you to Blesma

I ran a scuba diving company in Weymouth for several years until 2015, which is how I first got involved with Blesma. I had a lot of ex-military and military people working with me and at the time there was

a lot in the media about the guys returning from Afghanistan. I wanted to give something back, so approached Blesma about giving one of our boats to them for a weekend in the summer to take Members diving. Blesma took us up on our offer and for a couple of years Members came out and spent a weekend with us. I also spent a week in Egypt with Blesma, instructing on one of their Red Sea trips, and I helped the team for a couple of years at Members' Weekends on the Tri-Dive activity.

Did that influence your decision to join Blesma?

After the diving, I worked with Gwent Police for a couple of years as a civilian staff member, whilst doing administrative work for BSO Steve Fraser. My partner is a Blesma Member, so I have experienced the support and assistance given by the charity to its Members. Having been involved with Blesma for quite some time now, I am really grateful to have the opportunity to work full time for Blesma as I have seen what a positive impact the Association makes on people's lives.

Blesma sounds like it's been a big part of your life for a while now, but what do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Outside of work, I like to keep fit and active. My main hobbies are scuba diving, running and walking. I am also a PADI Instructor and regularly dive, both in the UK and abroad. I have completed a few 10K runs and already have plans to run the London Landmarks Half Marathon next year.

The National Lottery supports Blesma

Blesma's Midlands Brunch project has received a National Lottery fund boost! Thanks to players of the National Lottery, Blesma has received a grant of almost £10,000 which will enable Midlands Blesma Support Officer Sam Wileman and Outreach Officer Vanessa Lucas to organise multiple brunches across their region.

Featured in a recent issue of *Blesma Magazine*, the activity helps Members meet other Members in their area over a cuppa and a slice of cake. This allows the Members to increase their confidence, conquer isolation, and make new friends and connections, which gives them support from like-minded people.



Garden Grants

Sometimes it can be difficult for Members to maintain their gardens. Blesma awards an annual grant of up to £300 to each individual who submits a grant form, which can be applied for using the proforma that has been inserted into this issue of the Bulletin. The application, which must be submitted by January 2020, needs to be accompanied by receipts or a signed statement from your gardener. Blesma can't award grants to Members who have paid a relation to maintain their garden.

If you have mislaid the Gardening Grant form, or there wasn't one inserted into your copy of this Bulletin, please contact Susie at Blesma Chelmsford on 020 3954 3022 or at grantsadmin@blesma.org

The Blesma 100 Selby, North Yorkshire

We all like riding our bikes, but more than anything we like riding with our mates. The 100-mile ride is a rite of passage for many of us who are looking for the next big challenge. One hundred miles on a push bike is a very long way, but for anyone training for a 100-mile ride, the most important thing to remember is that it's just another bike ride.

For the fifth consecutive year, Blesma Members and our Regimental friends and family have taken part in the Blesma 100, an annual fundraising event that also raises awareness of what Blesma does for injured Service men and women.

Some of the riders are very fast and experienced, but many have little experience. There are even a few who have done a lot less training than you might expect, and yes, some take it on with no training at all! It doesn't matter, we are glad to be together as friends.

Many of us are Green Howard veterans, with good pals from other Infantry Regiments as well as across the three Services. We are always happy for a chance to catch up, enjoy the inevitable banter, and help each other over the finish line.

This year, we were lucky with the weather again, with little rain to speak of. An early start at 06.00 (it's always a very early start!) and



time to get registered, bikes ready with all the paraphernalia that goes with riding: drinks bottles filled, rations, spare tubes, gas, repair kits... the list goes on.

Just like every year, we had our Regimental Bugler; former Drum Major Bob Purvis. In Selby town centre we stood motionless, heads bowed, as the Act of Remembrance

was read, and there was complete silence as Bob played a perfect rendition of The Last Post.

Then the Blesma 100 began. Riders settled into groups, pushing on and watching the miles click slowly over. The Selby route was flat with some undulation, but there was a very strong headwind all day that required much effort.

What mattered, at the end of the day, were the friendships we renewed, and the achievement of taking on a challenge and getting through it together. In the bar that night we talked about the day's ride and enjoyed discussing every incident. We exaggerated and we laughed – a lot! And it's this camaraderie that really matters.

We'll be taking on another 100 miles next year, so if you're interested in joining in with a great bunch of Blesma people and meeting some new mates, then watch this space. I'll be releasing information and dates early in the New Year.

Jonathan Bell
Blesma Ambassador



Join the Blesma Carol Service at Chelmsford Cathedral

To commemorate Blesma's move to Chelmsford and to celebrate the festive season, Blesma is holding a Christmas Carol Service at Chelmsford Cathedral on 05 December.

The service will be presided over by the Revd Canon Ivor Moody and the Revd Martyn Gough, Chaplain of the Fleet and Archdeacon for the Royal Navy. Chelmsford Cathedral is a fitting choice of venue, as it has historical links to the military. The cathedral even boasts a section dedicated to the Remembrance of the Essex Regiment.

Alicia Lowes, a professional soprano, will be performing at the service alongside a musical quartet. A group of local school children will also be in attendance.

To conclude the celebrations, there will be festive mince pies and mulled wine after the service.

The event is free and open to everyone, and any local Blesma Members who would like to attend are welcome to bring as many family and friends as they wish.

*To book your place contact
Abbi at cceo@blesma.org*

Project Semaphore: Tech for older Members

Project Semaphore is a Royal Naval Association initiative which helps Armed Forces Veterans over the age of 65 to realise the many benefits of being online. By issuing them with iPads and hosting collective iPad training sessions, the project is combating veterans' feelings of social isolation and loneliness. The success of the project was acknowledged when it came top in the People's Choice poll at the recent Soldiering On Awards.

What do veterans say about the project? Providing an iPad and exploring the internet with the support of a friend or family member really makes a huge difference to veterans' lives:

"I use the iPad to keep in touch with my daughter and grandchildren. Following a nasty fall, I am in hospital for the long haul," said one veteran. "The iPad is invaluable, using Facetime to catch up with my family keeps me included in family life."



Another veteran said: "I would never have bothered with one of these things, but now I am able to be in contact with friends and relatives all around the world – it is truly amazing!" One more commented: "Receiving the iPad, as well as attending the training sessions, has been great – coming here has been like coming to a little oasis away from everything else that is going on in my life."

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

In order to receive an iPad, veterans must:

- Be over 65 years of age
- Have served in the Armed Forces (this is a Royal Naval Association-led project, however it is able to offer iPads to eligible members of the Army and RAF if they can be supported in a group)
- Not have regular personal access to the internet

If you have any questions regarding the project, please contact the Project Manager at sarah@royalnavalassoc.com or ask your BSO to make contact for you



Tickets For Troops marks double figures

Tickets For Troops is delighted to announce the distribution of 1.5 million tickets to members of the Armed Forces as the military charity celebrates its tenth anniversary.

The charity, launched in November 2009, provides members of the Armed Forces community with the opportunity to attend a range of sporting, theatrical and music events around the country in recognition of their service and sacrifice to the country.

“We are delighted to use this moment to say a massive ‘thank you’ to all our donors who have shown us such fantastic support over the years,” said Stuart Higgins, Director of Tickets For Troops. “We never believed the charity would reach this point, and it just goes to show how much we all respect and admire members of the UK’s Armed Forces. Let’s hope we can make another 10 years.”

Due to the number of available tickets, Tickets For Troops is not able to offer tickets to veterans or those members of HM Forces who were medically discharged prior to 2001.

ABOUT TICKETS FOR TROOPS

- Tickets for Troops (TFT) was set up in 2009 to provide members of the Armed Forces with free tickets for major sporting events, theatre performances, music concerts and cultural attractions
- Since launching 10 years ago, TFT has been given more than 1,500,000 tickets, whilst more than 140,000 troops have registered on the website
- Tickets are available on the TFT website to troops who are currently serving, those who have been medically discharged since 2001, and the next of kin of those who have died as a result of their service
- Troops are encouraged to go online and register at www.ticketsfortroops.org.uk to take advantage of the tickets available to our Armed Forces

For more information, please contact William Campbell-Lamerton at Tickets for Troops on 020 7932 0808 or email press@ticketsfortroops.org.uk
For more information about Tickets for Troops, please visit www.ticketsfortroops.org.uk

A holiday that is truly accessible

Have you ever booked a much-needed holiday in the sun only to find that your ‘accessible’ room wasn’t? We have just returned from the Hotel Cala Bona in Majorca which ensures that disabled guests can have a good time.

Having been run by the same family since 1924, they know what people need. Our suite had ground floor access, a fully accessible bathroom, shower chair, and fridge for insulin. Several rooms are adaptable for disabled guests, and there are two fully adapted suites with one or two bedrooms/bathrooms.

The first floor dining room and swimming pool are accessed by a lift. The pool has a hoist, with an attendant, and a great poolside bar. Meals are all buffet service, but there are staff available if you need any extra help. The resort has



several miles of flat, pedestrianised promenade, and there are two disabled-friendly beaches with ramps, toilets and changing rooms. A pre-bookable service can transfer you from your own chair to a sea-going chair with a lifeguard to help you swim.



Accessible rooms and suites can be booked directly with the hotel (003 4971 85924) or take a look at their website (www.calabonahotel.com) for videos of the hotel and surrounding area. If you prefer to book a package holiday, you can use the Tui Welfare Service.

Extra equipment, like a buggy or walker, can be ordered through Nigel Keenan of Lower Hire, who will deliver to your hotel with a 20% discount if you quote this article (www.lower-hire.co.uk or 0034 6268 10688). I cannot recommend this resort and hotel highly enough – give it a try some time.

Jacque Whiteley (wife of Member Nigel)

News from across the Branches



NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

The Branch held its annual Summer Evening Dinner on Tuesday 02 July at The Belfry Hotel, Strelley. It was a great evening with live music from local duo Fran and Jono. Due to its success we will be holding the event annually, as we do our Christmas lunch, which is due to be held on Tuesday 17 December at the same venue.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

As a Branch, we have meetings on the first Tuesday of every month, during which Members get the chance to discuss past and future events. The meetings also give the two Welfare Reps the chance to update the Branch on the welfare of Members who are too ill to



attend, and arrange visits should the Member so wish.

We are now fortunate to have a Blesma Outreach Officer, Andy Barlow, who attends Branch meetings when his busy schedule allows. One of his responsibilities is to arrange local activities for Members, and one of the recent activities included a morning on a speed boat running out of Gunwharf Quays. Each Member was even given the chance to steer the boat, which had been adapted for wheelchair users.

As a Branch, our annual activities include a summer barbecue, a summer lunch, and a Christmas lunch which usually attracts between 75 and 90 people. This year's lunch will take place on 15 December, and Members and their families are welcome to attend at a subsidised price.

We also regularly get invites to attend annual lunches with nearby Branches such as Southampton and Bournemouth. This year has already seen a visit to the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth's chambers, and a Royal Marines theatre performance given by the newly appointed Passing Out parade band, both of which were arranged by Portsmouth Branch Members.

Next year, we are looking at organising a boat trip on the River Hamble in Southampton, and if it proves popular, this will take place as an annual event.

Should any Blesma Member wish to join the Portsmouth Branch please contact Sheila Brown (Branch Secretary) on 07733 102364



Words: Rory Smith/Shropshire Star

WALSALL AND DISTRICT BRANCH

On Saturday 14 September, the Walsall and District Branch celebrated the 100th birthday of Nan Allen. Born on 15 September 1919, Blesma Widow Annie Maud Allen, better known as 'Nan', celebrated her centenary with a house party which was attended by family members, neighbours, friends and former students.

Guests travelled from as far afield as Spain and Belgium to make the event, which gave visitors the chance to drop into her house throughout the day for a quick cup of tea and a natter, or a lengthy afternoon celebration.

Blesma Branch Members James Keating and Hazel Whitelaw were in attendance and presented Annie with a card and bouquet of flowers on behalf of all Members of the Walsall Branch.

"It was a lovely sunny afternoon – a very pleasant occasion – and

Nan was in great form and looking younger than me, although most people do nowadays!" said James. "Nan really is incredible, and it would be hard for anyone to place her at anywhere near 100 if they had not been told otherwise!

"She was proud to be able to show off her card from The Queen and was delighted with the beautiful bouquet of flowers and card that I presented to her. She asked me to give Members her sincere thanks – so thank you all!" said James.

Nan was married to Larry Allen, a World War II veteran, who died in 2006. The pair had three daughters; Christine, Jane and Kath. Asked the secret to her long life, Nan put it down to having a loving husband – and a varied diet. "I still eat butter and I still have full cream milk – I think that's the trick to my long life!" she said.

Members in full sail at the Greek Regatta 2019

On 15 September, Blesma Member Nigel Smith took 11 of his fellow Members to Greece for a week of sailing around the Ionian Islands.

On their arrival at Preveza Airport in Lefkas they were taken to their destination – Vounaki Beach Club – where three yachts were waiting to be crewed. They were split into groups of four and each group was given a safety briefing by their skipper to make them ready for their first day of sailing. Two boats were manned by qualified Day Skippers and the third by a Yacht Master.

The Yacht Master would be teaching a crew of three Members the basics of sailing as well as training them to become fully qualified Competent Crew; a qualification recognised by The Royal Yachting Association.

Each day brought new challenges and opportunities. On the first day, they anchored for a bite to eat and went for a swim in the beautiful Ionian Sea. The nature of sailing requires each Member to be able to get on, off, and around the boat safely and unaided, including using a gang plank with no railings from the jetty to the boat.

Swimming brought its own challenges. Entering the water was easy, but getting back on the boat from deep water was not for the faint-hearted. Veterans never say



never though, and they were there to give each other a helping hand.

The wind would get up most afternoons, giving the morning to learn knots, navigational skills, and the basics of sailing. This put everyone in a good position for a race on the Thursday against some seasoned sailors.

On the day, they had to sail 15 nautical miles just to reach the starting point. That required an early 07.30 start, but what a beautiful time of day to set sail, with the sun coming up and the only sound being that of the sea (and your crew mates!)

The race demanded that the Members apply the whole week's teachings, and what an experience it was! Two boats entered as the third worked towards achieving the Competent Crew qualification. Both yachts gave a credible account of themselves; out of 42 participants Orion, skippered by Nigel Smith, came 19th and the other came 15th. Not bad for novice sailors!

Meanwhile, two of the three Members working towards the Competent Crew qualification passed the course, whilst the third decided it wasn't for them.

The sailing was incredibly worthwhile. The Members gained valuable experience and made great friendships with other Members and civilians alike.

Many Members felt that the expedition gave them a sense of purpose, and allowed them to learn new skills and push themselves to limits they had previously thought unreachable. Most valuable, of course, was the camaraderie between the veterans. Money can't buy that but, thanks to Blesma, it was there for all to enjoy in Greece.

“Members felt the expedition gave them a sense of purpose, and allowed them to learn new skills and push themselves”

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

A council in Wales has recently introduced a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Armed Forces veterans. This is fantastic news for Blesma's Welsh Members. The information currently available online states:

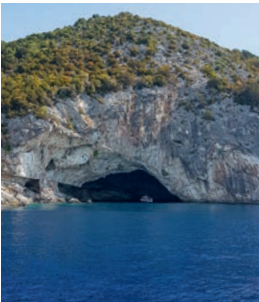
Torfaen Council has introduced a guaranteed interview scheme for Armed Forces veterans. The scheme supports the pledges in the Armed Forces Community Covenant. Veterans can find making the transition to civilian life extremely challenging, particularly in finding and securing lasting employment.

The specific aims of the scheme are to:

- Assist veterans in overcoming barriers to finding civilian employment
- Reduce the risk of veterans having health and welfare problems as a result of long-term unemployment
- Redress the balance for veterans' re-employment prospects by giving them the chance to improve their transition back into civilian life
- Complement the re-employment support provided to veterans leaving the Armed Forces by the Ministry of Defence
- Benefit from the transferable skills and qualities of veterans

The scheme does not guarantee a job for veterans. Selection procedures will still ensure that the best candidate for the job is appointed, based on objective criteria in the role profile.

(Source: www.torfaen.gov.uk)



Members on target at NRA Championship

The National Rifle Association's Military Adaptive Shooting Championship 2019, included as part of the NRA's 150th Imperial Meeting, went particularly well for the Blesma Members taking part, with scores approaching record levels. The camaraderie among those gathered, however, was just as jovial as has come to be expected!

The competition was friendly but fierce nonetheless, with the scores being very close in some of the competitions. There were three stages to the competition:

1. Advancing Target
Competitors had to fire 10 shots at a target which rapidly advanced towards them before turning around sharply after about five seconds so it could not longer be shot at.

2. Snaps and Rapids

This consisted of three rounds all at a distance of 50 metres. First came the 'Deliberate' shoot in which 10 shots had to be fired precisely. Next up was the sniper style target or 'Snap' shoot, and finally the 'Rapid' shoot in which 10 shots must hit one target in three four-second exposures.

3. McQueen

Another sniper-style shoot which is considered most challenging. Targets barely larger than the palm of a hand appeared randomly in one of 12 locations at any time and in a random order for just three seconds. Timing, precision and patience were all required.

The total accumulated scores from all three competition stages formed the overall positions. It was nice that

the Blesma volunteers, helpers and carers were also allowed to shoot, but their scores were not counted towards the overall competition.

All in all, the day was a great success in terms of both attainment and enjoyment. Altogether, 22 Blesma Members took part in the activity, with former Royal Engineer Ash Hall taking home the NRA gold medal.

NRA/ARA Military Adaptive Championship Results

Round One

1 Chris Parkes 2 Ash Hall
3 Wayne McGregor

Round Two

1 Olaf Jones 2 Ryan Goodman
3 Jeffrey Winder

Round Three

1 Ash Hall 2 Geoff Newport
3 Robert Osborn



On the water at Waveney Sailability

Wednesday 04 September saw Waveney Sailability host 17 Blesma Members, as well as their family members and friends for quite a challenging day on the water.

Though the weather was against them, it certainly did not stop anyone from making the most of the day. Blesma Member and Trustee Bob Monkhouse, BSO Kevin Long and Outreach Officer Darren Fuller were all there to offer their support.

Veterans from across the country applied to join the day's sailing, which was organised a few months prior by Darren, Bob and Rob McCartney, a double amputee who volunteers with Sailability.

The day was a great success and everyone had a fantastic time out on the water. Following the positive feedback received by Waveney Sailability, it seems likely that this event will be put on again next summer, so hopefully more Blesma Members can visit and enjoy a day on the water.

Towards the end of the day, the instructors paired up with Members for a number of races. The very worthy winners were Mick Foulds and Jackie Soards.

A huge thank you must go to everyone at Waveney Sailability, including all the instructors and volunteers who helped the day go smoothly. Perhaps the biggest thank you should go to the ladies

who kept the sailors supplied with teas, coffees and snacks!

“A big ‘thank you’ to all of you and your family and friends for turning up on a very unpredictable day. It was great to see it all come

together!” said event organiser Rob. “On a personal note, I'd like to thank everyone once again for making the day really special – it is one that is sure to be remembered for a long time to come.”



Family Adventure Activities Week 2019

19-23 AUGUST BENDRIGG TRUST

If I had been told that I would be canoeing on Lake Windermere or whizzing down a zip wire a little more than a year after my right leg was amputated below the knee I wouldn't have believed you!

I spent a week at the Bendrigg Trust centre near Kendal in the Lake District with my wife and young son in August, where I was taken out of my comfort zone every day. I was continually encouraged to take part by other Blesma family members and Trust staff, but there was no greater thrill than being able to do these activities alongside my wife and son.

I use a wheelchair, and being on an active par with them, with all the correct equipment, made us feel like we were post-op as a family, all engaging in an activity together. I never thought I would go tubing, abseiling, or wall climbing but these were just a few of the things I achieved. My BSO constantly tells me that you can surprise yourself when you remain positive and focused. I left with a new understanding of that.

Kevin Worsley

It was a fantastic week and over far too soon. It was really helpful to be with families like ours who are at different stages of a journey to a 'new normal'. It gave me a lot of much-needed encouragement



that we will get there too sooner or later. What made it for our son, Alex, was that we could all join in with the various activities on offer, and that his dad was a fully active participant. My favourite bit – aside from the giant-size tennis racquets – was the inclusiveness of it all and the way everyone was enabled to participate.

Ceri Worsley (Kevin's wife)

The Bendrigg Trust activities week was an amazing time to interact with other Members, play outside, and bring families together. It was an absolutely superb time for me and my family. It really helped to bring us back together and allowed us to spend time with each other.

It was certainly not a holiday for sitting around! We had lots of activities we could choose to do and participate in, and for anyone with physical disabilities, it blew my mind how many things are possible. We even had my dad cycling around an outdoor track!

It was such a time of all-round adventure, excitement and happiness that I honestly don't think you could get anywhere else.

And just to finish off, if any Blesma families are thinking of applying for the holiday, get your name down as soon as you can. Trust me, you won't regret it!

Alex Worsley (Kevin's 11-year-old son)

Leading from the front

Earlier this year, Craig Winspear became a Blesma leader on the action-packed USO Warrior Week. The trip was a first on the Blesma Activities calendar, but for Craig it also marked a year-long progression from being a Member participant on an activity to becoming a Blesma lead.

From 25 May-05 June, Craig and 20 other Members, along with other wounded, injured and sick Service members, were invited to Virginia, USA to take part in various therapeutic and recreational activities to support their recovery.

“In 2018, my BSO Kevin Long encouraged me to get involved with Blesma and the Activities Programme,” said Craig. “There was a slot available on a recce to Virginia with a small group of Members and Blesma’s Activities Manager Jess March to trial the idea of Blesma taking part in USO Warrior Week. It was an amazing experience and though I was already a confident person, taking part in things I hadn’t done before just added to that.

“The following year, Jess asked if I would be interested in leading the activity and I jumped at the chance. I knew that my military experience in leading people would allow me to organise a large group. The Activities Team did all the organisational work behind the scenes, and my role was to encourage more Members to sign up, as well as organise the group once we were in the USA.”

Craig’s recruiting efforts meant that 45 per cent of Blesma Members who took part were brand new to the Activities Programme.

“I had plenty of time to focus on this one activity and I managed to get Members involved for the first time by using connections I’d made through the military,” said Craig. “If my connections couldn’t apply, I’d ask them if they knew anyone who might want to, and it went from there. These were people who I knew needed help, but were not the ones reaching out for it, so it was satisfying to be involved. That’s what Blesma does; it helps people who are struggling and gets them out of their dark times.”

During the trip, the group took part in pursuits such as horse riding, surfing and water skiing, and visited a shooting range, the Lincoln Memorial, the National Mall in Washington DC, and even paid a special visit to the NATO Officers Mess, where a Blesma plaque now hangs.

“It was an even better experience as a lead because knowing you’ve been instrumental in helping Blesma create growth in people, especially in regards to how they view their injury and capabilities, is incredible,”

said Craig. “I watched as those who were timid and shy gradually became more confident, and by the end of the activity, they were the ones leading the show.

“It was an emotional event with a lot of tears but a lot of laughter, too. I’m at a stage in my life where I am quite an upbeat, confident person but a lot of people aren’t there yet, so it’s beneficial for me to help them on their journey and see them get to where I am.

“I found that was a more valuable experience for me personally than being a participant.”



Essex Fitness and Wellbeing course

Members took part in a Fitness and Wellbeing getaway in Essex this September. They spent three days doing yoga, circuit training and gym sessions with a personal trainer, all adapted to fit their individual fitness levels, abilities and needs.

A nutritionist gave a talk on healthy eating and provided each Member with a booklet of recipe ideas to inspire them to continue their healthy eating at home.

The event was organised by BSO Kevin Long and Outreach Officer Darren Fuller with the aim of adapting and trialling the Fitness and Wellbeing course run in Fuerteventura by BSO Mike Downes on a local level.

After fantastic feedback and a great level of involvement from the Members it is hoped that similar sessions will continue later in the year in this and other areas.

WHAT DID MEMBERS THINK OF THE ACTIVITY?



STU ELLIS

Why did you apply for the activity?

I have lapsed in my fitness for a number of reasons and I thought this course would give me my motivation back – and it definitely did that! I also wanted to make sure my diet at home was healthy.

What did you think of the course?

The fitness side was excellent. I was amazed at the nutrition talk, and it gave me the information that I needed. I thought that fat-free was the way to go, but obviously it's a cover for putting more sugar into food! Thanks to the course, I have changed all my fat-free food at home. I have also joined a gym, have started swimming, and I'm going to get back into jogging.



MARK SIDWELLS

How has the course helped you?

It has changed my eating dramatically and I have cut out many foods, replacing them with far healthier options. I never realised that so many things were unhealthy for me and were not helping my exercise goals – who would have thought bread was so unhealthy? It has shown me that I needed to change my exercise regime and how much difference small changes can make.

Did you learn anything new?

The yoga was an eye-opener! Being a little 'old school' I used to laugh at this type of activity, but it certainly helped me to relax and, in a way, cope better with phantom pains.

What would you say to those thinking about trying this event?

I would recommend that anyone who is doing little or no exercise should focus themselves and realise they are not on their own. The course will encourage people to stop using any issues they are facing as an excuse not to do exercise or to buy takeaways.



CHARMAINE HEALY

How did you hear about the activity?

The course was recommended to me by Kevin [Long] as I'm trying to

eat healthier and get fit. I thought it would be interesting to hear what the experts had to say. I really enjoyed the activity; it was good meeting the different professionals, and I learned a lot in the nutrition lecture as well as having set meals that showed us portion sizes. I also wanted to see if I could do the same as the lads when it came to the activities!

What impact has the three-day activity had on you?

We were given recipe ideas in our handout, so I've already tried a few of the meals. I have tried to move towards eating the foods the nutritionist spoke about on the course, and I have adapted my meals to try to eat more healthily.



KEVIN WORSLEY

You attended the Fitness and Wellbeing course last year. How did this compare?

Kevin Long delivered a fantastic trial course that expanded on the wellbeing side to include yoga, meditation and sports massages, which went down exceptionally well after the numerous gym and outdoor sessions! I think we all came away from the course feeling equipped to make some lifestyle changes and felt more positive by the end.

You supported each other during the course. Has that continued?

The Members on the course have continued with a WhatsApp group, and we have been sharing healthy food ideas based on the talk from the professional dietician on the course.

Start applying for Activities for 2020

New year, new you! The 2020 Activities Calendar will have more on offer than ever before. Here's just a taste of what you can expect from Blesma next year...

WINTER SPORTS ESCAPE 2020

Location: Aspen, Colorado

Date: 23 February - 01 March

Application deadline: 06 January

A mixture of Winter sports will be available for those who want to try new ones for the first time or develop their skills further. There will also be yoga and mindfulness on offer, all with stunning scenery as a backdrop.

Who can take part?

Any Member

Requirements

You must be able to enter the USA and your passport must have at least six months' validity during the time of travel.

WIDOWS' AND SENIORS' WEEKS (SPRING 2020)

Location: Littlecate House, Hungerford, Berkshire

Dates: Widows' Week 11-15 May

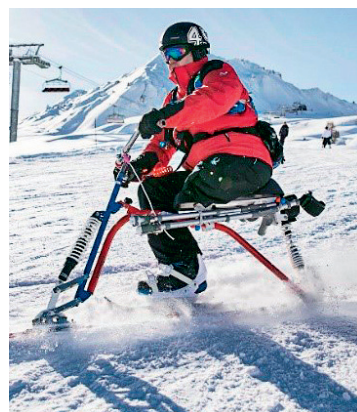
Seniors' Week 18-22 May

Application deadline: TBC

Based at one of the prestigious Warner hotels, each week will focus on relaxing and socialising in and around Berkshire, with gentle activities and sightseeing.

Who can take part?

Seniors' Weeks are open to both Members and Widow(er)s over



the age of 60. Widows' Weeks are for Widows only.

New for 2020!

COUPLES SENIORS' WEEK

Location: Alvaston Hall, Nantwich, Cheshire

Date: 03-07 August

Application deadline: TBC

New to 2020, the week will be set out the same as Seniors' Week but is intended solely for couples over the age of 60. Members and their spouses will enjoy a week of relaxation and gentle activities around Nantwich, as well as some great evening entertainment at the Warner hotel.

Look out for the full 2020 Activities Brochure in the Winter issue of Blesma Magazine, landing on doorsteps in mid-December!

Northern Ireland Update

BLESMA AT THE BELFAST INTERNATIONAL TATTOO

Blesma Members enjoyed a bird's eye view of the Belfast International Tattoo in early September. They watched the grand spectacle of bands alongside immaculately choreographed performers and dancers, and listened to the amazing sounds resounding around the SSE Arena.

A number of Blesma Members also had the opportunity to chat with members of The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Scotland prior to the performance, which also proved to be a great photo opportunity and a nice memento of the day!



A TASTE OF THE GOOD LIFE

Members visited Orchard Acre Farm, a tranquil location in the heart of County Fermanagh, in September where a 'Plot to Plate' cookery experience was waiting for them. This proved to be an extremely creative and fun-filled day.

It was decided that the Members would be responsible for coming up with, and preparing, lunch. With the challenge set, Members began harvesting the produce from the garden and orchards to make their own unique dishes, and returned to the kitchen to cook up a storm.

Everyone turned into a *MasterChef* hopeful and created the most innovative dishes and new tastes – who would have thought that grated raw beetroot in chocolate cake would taste so delicious?

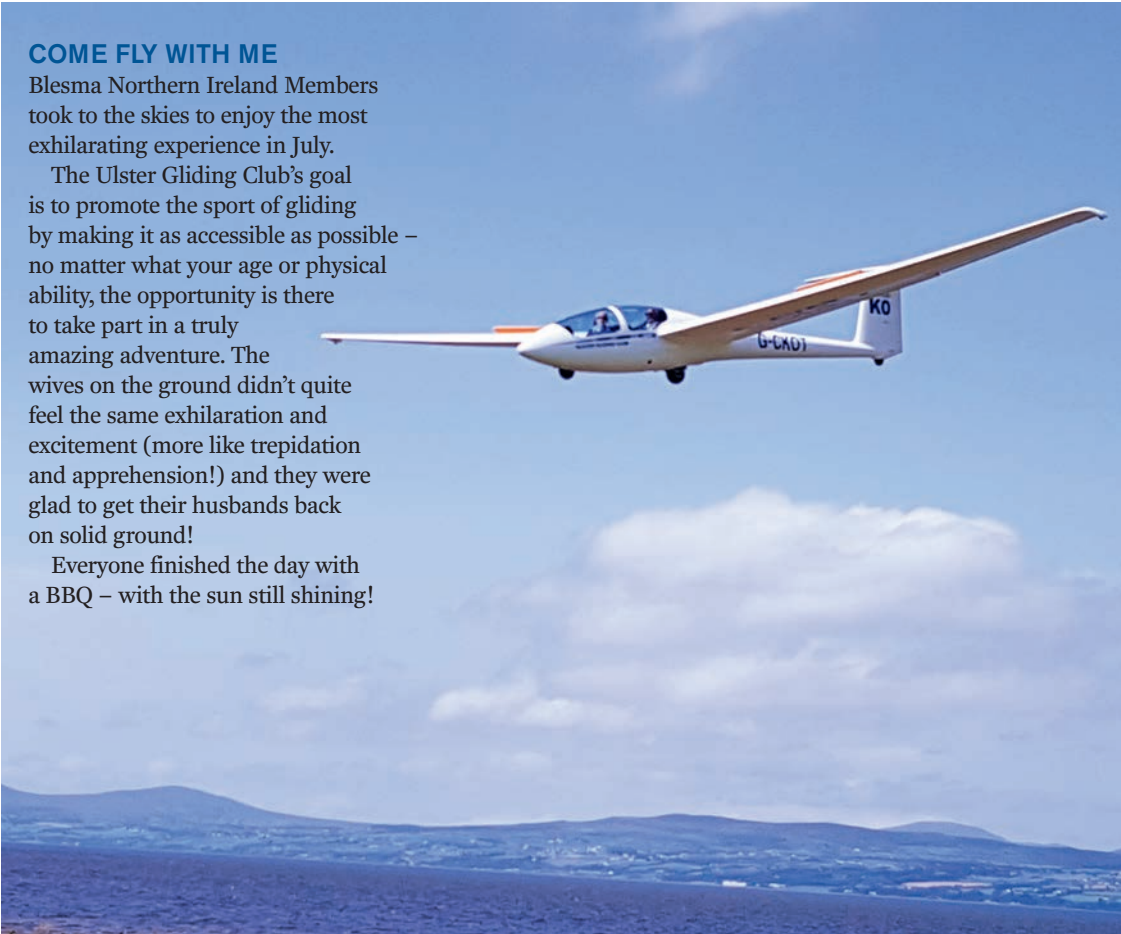


COME FLY WITH ME

Blesma Northern Ireland Members took to the skies to enjoy the most exhilarating experience in July.

The Ulster Gliding Club's goal is to promote the sport of gliding by making it as accessible as possible – no matter what your age or physical ability, the opportunity is there to take part in a truly amazing adventure. The wives on the ground didn't quite feel the same exhilaration and excitement (more like trepidation and apprehension!) and they were glad to get their husbands back on solid ground!

Everyone finished the day with a BBQ – with the sun still shining!



Words: Fiona Morrison

Spotlight on Benefits and Social Care

Welcome to the Bulletin's regular section on the benefits system. As well as highlighting some useful information regarding the benefits system, on occasions we will be raising awareness of some health and social care matters. If you would like to discuss your benefit entitlement or have a social care query, please contact your Blesma Support Officer (details are on p30). Alternatively, you can contact Liz Watling in the independence and wellbeing team by email at iwabenefits@blesma.org or by calling her on 020 8548 3516.

HELP WITH HEATING COSTS

Now that the seasons have changed and the colder weather will be with us for some months to come, we thought it would be helpful to remind you about some of the ways the government can help with fuel costs.

WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

This is an annual lump sum payment of between £100 and £300 to help pensioners with heating costs. You qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment if both the following apply:

- You were born before 05 April 1954
- You have lived in the UK for at least one day during the week of 16-22 September 2019 (known as the qualifying week)

If you did not live in the UK during the qualifying week you might still get the payment if both the following apply:

- You live in Switzerland or a European Economic Area country
- You have a genuine link with the UK social security system, such as having lived or worked in the UK for most of your life

You cannot receive the payment if you live in Cyprus, France, Gibraltar, Greece, Malta, Portugal or Spain because the average winter temperature is higher than the warmest region of the UK.

You will not qualify if you meet one of the following excluding conditions:

- You are in hospital getting free treatment for more than a year
- You lived in a care home for the whole time between 24 June - 22 September 2019, and received Pension Credit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- You were in prison for the whole week between 16-22 September 2019
- You need permission to enter the UK and your granted leave states that you cannot claim public funds

HOW DO YOU CLAIM?

You should automatically receive a payment without making a claim if either:

- You received a payment last year and your circumstances have not changed
- You are getting State Pension or another social security benefit (excluding Child Benefit, Universal Credit, Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit)

If you are entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment and your only government paid income is from a War Pension or War Widows Pension, your Winter Fuel Payment will be processed by Veterans UK. For queries please contact 0808 191 4218.

WARM HOME DISCOUNT SCHEME

This is a £140 credit to your electricity bill. You can also qualify if you use a pre-pay or pay as you go electricity meter. There are two ways to qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme:

- You get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit – known as the ‘core group’
- You are on a low income and meet your energy supplier’s criteria for the scheme – known as the ‘broader group’

HOW TO CLAIM

Core group

You qualify for the discount if, on 07 July 2019, all of the following applied:

- Your electricity supplier was part of the scheme
- Your name (or your partner’s) was on the bill
- You were getting the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit

If you qualify for the core group, you should receive a letter between October and December 2019 telling you how to get the discount. Your letter will say if you need to call a helpline by 28 February 2020 to confirm your details. Your electricity supplier will apply your discount to your bill by 31 March 2020.

If you are eligible for the core group and do not receive a letter, contact the Warm Home Discount Team on 0800 731 0214.

Broader group

You may be able to apply directly to your electricity supplier for help if you don’t qualify under the core group rules. You may qualify if, on 07 July 2019, all of the following applied:

- You were on a low income
- You got certain means-tested benefits
- Your electricity supplier was part of the scheme
- Your name (or your partner’s) was on the bill

Your electricity supplier decides their own criteria for the scheme. Check with your supplier to see if you’re eligible and how to apply. Do not contact the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The following suppliers are part of the scheme:

- Angelic Energy
- Atlantic
- Avro Energy
- Beam Energy
- Boost
- Bristol Energy
- British Gas

- Bulb Energy
- Citizen Energy
- Co-operative Energy
- E (Gas and Electricity)
- Ebico
- EDF Energy
- E.ON
- First Utility
- Flow Energy
- Fosse Energy
- GB Energy
- Great North Energy
- Green Network Energy
- Green Star / Hudson
- Liverpool Energy Community Company
- Lumo
- npower
- Octopus Energy
- OVO
- Powershop
- Ram Energy
- Robin Hood Energy
- Sainsbury’s Energy
- Scottish Gas
- Scottish Hydro
- Scottish Power
- Shell Energy
- Southern Electric
- SSE
- SWALEC
- Utilita
- Utility Warehouse
- White Rose Energy
- Your Energy Sussex

Cold Weather Payment

This is an automatic payment of £25 for each qualifying week (between 01 November and 31 March) if:

- The average temperature recorded or forecast over seven consecutive days at the designated weather station for your area is 0°C or less and
- You have been awarded one of the following qualifying benefits:
 - Pension Credit
 - Income Support or income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance and you have either:
 - A disability or pensioner premium
 - A disabled child

BENEFITS AND SOCIAL CARE

- Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element
- A child under 5 living with you
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance and you are in either the work related activity group or support group. If you are not in either group you may get a Cold Weather Payment if you have either:
 - A severe or enhanced disability premium
 - A pensioner premium
 - A disabled child
 - Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element
 - A child under 5 living with you
- Universal Credit as long as you are not employed or self-employed and you have either:
 - A limited capability for work element
 - A disabled child element (whether you are employed or not)
 - A child under 5 living with you
- Support for Mortgage Interest

You are not entitled to a Cold Weather Payment if you are living in a care home. You do not need to make a claim for a Cold Weather Payment. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) should automatically pay you if you qualify, as they will be aware of your means-tested benefit entitlement.

SOCIAL SECURITY SCOTLAND

As reported in previous Bulletins, the benefits system in Scotland has changed, and there are more changes to come. A few benefits have already been devolved to the Scottish Government and others are currently in the pipeline. Some of the new payments have already started and we are now aware of the roll-out of others, so we felt it was time to give our Scottish Members a more in-depth update.

The Scottish Government has created a new public service agency, Social Security Scotland, to deliver the benefits in a way that is consistent with the approach outlined in the Social Security Scotland

Charter. Only people living in Scotland will be able to claim the devolved benefits. All other benefits not included in the table (right), such as Universal Credit, Disability Living Allowance, and Employment and Support Allowance will remain the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions.

War Pension and its associated allowances, and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme remain the responsibility of the Veterans Agency. Once fully operational, Social Security Scotland will deliver benefits to 1.4 million people and provide £3.5 billion in payments every year.

The Scottish Government will gradually introduce the benefits that it is creating, including the ones that will replace DWP benefits in Scotland. They will initially open for new applicants, where you are required to apply for a benefit. Over time they will work with the DWP to transfer people on a devolved benefit to the new Scottish system.

More than half a million cases will transfer. With the DWP's cooperation, the Scottish Government expects the majority of people to be transferred to its new system by 2023, with all cases fully transferred in 2024.

If you are currently receiving benefits from the DWP you do not need to do anything right now. The Scottish Government is working with the DWP to make sure that they keep people up to date when more details become available.

Please see the table opposite for a summary of the benefits and expected date of implementation.

If you would like further information, please contact Steve Burton, Blesma Support Officer for Scotland on either 01312 262910 or at bsosniroi@blesma.org You can also contact Blesma's Independence and Wellbeing Adviser Liz Watling on 020 8548 3516 or at iwabenefits@blesma.org You can also find more information on the Scottish Government website at www.mygov.scot/benefits

Department for Work and Pensions benefit	SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT BENEFIT	AVAILABLE WHEN
Not applicable – new benefit	CARER'S ALLOWANCE SUPPLEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extra payment for those receiving Carer's Allowance • Paid twice yearly 	Available now
Sure Start Maternity Grant	BEST START GRANT PREGNANCY AND BABY PAYMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist low-income families with the costs of bringing up a child • For those on a qualifying means-tested benefit (unless under 18) BEST START FOOD PAYMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To buy healthy food for parent and child (up to 4 years old) • For those on a qualifying means-tested benefit (unless under 18) 	Available now Available now
Not applicable – new benefit	BEST START GRANT EARLY YEARS PAYMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist with the costs of a child aged 2-3½ • For those on a qualifying means-tested benefit (unless under 18) 	Available now
Not applicable – new benefit	BEST START GRANT SCHOOL AGE PAYMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For parent of 4- or 5-year-old child (claiming within date restrictions) • For those on a qualifying means-tested benefit (unless under 18) 	Available now
Funeral Expenses Payment	FUNERAL EXPENSE ASSISTANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support towards funeral costs • For those on a qualifying means-tested benefit • The person responsible for the funeral needs to make the claim 	Available now
Not applicable – new benefit	YOUNG CARER GRANT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For carers aged 16-18 caring for a disabled person for 16 hours or more per week • The cared for person needs to be on a qualifying disability benefit 	Autumn 2019
Not applicable – new benefit	JOB GRANT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support 16-24 year olds back into employment • For those on a qualifying benefit 	Spring 2020
Disability Living Allowance (child)	DISABILITY ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children up to the age of 18 who have ill health or disability and have difficulty with their personal care and/or mobility 	Summer 2020
Attendance Allowance	DISABILITY ASSISTANCE FOR OLDER PEOPLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people over State Pension age who have difficulty with their personal care 	Winter 2020
Personal Independence Payments	DISABILITY ASSISTANCE FOR WORKING AGE PEOPLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people aged from 18 to pension age who have ill health or disability and have difficulty with their personal care and/or mobility 	Early 2021
Carer's Allowance	CARER'S ASSISTANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For carers aged 18 or over who are caring for someone for 35 hours or more a week • The cared for person must be on a qualifying disability benefit 	Winter 2021
Winter Fuel Payment	WINTER HEATING ASSISTANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra support for those who require assistance with heating costs • Rules are yet to be announced 	Winter 2021
Cold Weather Payment	COLD SPELL – HEATING ASSISTANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra support when the weather drops below a set temperature • For those on a qualifying means-tested benefit • Rules are yet to be announced 	Winter 2021

HOW TO ARRANGE SOCIAL CARE

What is social care?

Social care is the term used to describe care and support provided to enable people to manage their daily living tasks. This includes supporting people with physical, mental and learning disabilities. Care and support can be provided in a number of ways, including:

- Care at home
- Care in a residential home
- Equipment and adaptations to your home
- At a day care centre
- Help when out and about

How do I access social care?

Healthcare is centrally organised by the government, whilst local authorities administer social care. You can contact your local authority, which will carry out an assessment of your needs, usually by a social worker, occupational therapist, or other qualified professional. There is usually a means-tested charging assessment as social care is not free at the point of contact, unlike the NHS. The means test works out whether or not:

- The council pays the full cost of your care
- The council contributes to some of the cost and you pay the rest
- You pay for all of your care

What is charged for depends on whether you live in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales. If you prefer, you can contact a care agency directly without the involvement of your local authority and they can complete an assessment of your needs. You will have to pay for the full cost of any care you have arranged privately.

In some situations, social care and support is provided by the NHS instead of your local authority. In these instances it is free. This includes:

- Some short-term care after leaving hospital in order for you to prepare to manage independently at home. This is known as 'reablement'
- Care if you have a complex and serious health condition. This is known as 'continuing healthcare'

FORCES MONEYPLAN SCAM INFORMATION

There's a well-used phrase that we're all familiar with: 'If it's too good to be true, it probably is'. Unfortunately, when it comes to the complex world of financial services, it is often difficult for the layman to know what is too good to be true.

A few months ago, the press highlighted the case of 61-year-old Tom Johnston who, after a 25-year career in the military specialising in communications with the Royal Signals and Special Forces, lost £150,000 in savings to scammers after he was emailed by fraudsters who posed as investment brokers.

More recently (in August), the Ministry of Defence highlighted a potential phishing* scam impersonating Ministry of Defence officials. Targets of the fraud have received emails purporting to originate within the MoD attempting to make contact or seeking money.

Given the rise of financial scams, Blesma would like to bring your attention once more to the service called Forces MoneyPlan, which provides a free and totally confidential meeting with a fully qualified financial adviser who is a verified member of their professional body, the Personal Finance Society.

These pro bono meetings can be held face to face or by telephone/Skype at a convenient day and time, and are designed to help recipients identify and better understand their financial needs, priorities and options, as well as help recognise and avoid a growing number of increasingly sophisticated financial scams.

Called 'generic financial guidance', it seeks to deliver free guidance in respect of either a specific financial issue or overall financial wellbeing, helping the recipient tackle an issue or better understand, cope with, and plan their finances without involving the promotion or sale of any financial product or service.

If you would like to find out more, please visit www.thepfs.org/about-us/initiatives/forces-moneyplan

*Phishing is the fraudulent attempt to obtain sensitive information such as usernames, passwords and credit card details to extract money by disguising oneself as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.

Members' Weekend 2020

13-15 June 2020
Crowne Plaza, Heythrop Park

Next year's Members' Weekend will stay at the same venue; the Crowne Plaza in Heythrop Park, Oxfordshire. If you would like to come along to meet old friends and make some new ones, find out what Blesma Members have been up to, and have your say on what Blesma should be doing to support Members in the future, please put the date in your diary now and apply straight away using the application form that has been inserted into this issue of the Bulletin.

As always, the event is free to Ordinary and Associate Members, as well as their partners or carers. We hope to see you there!



Useful contact numbers across the Association

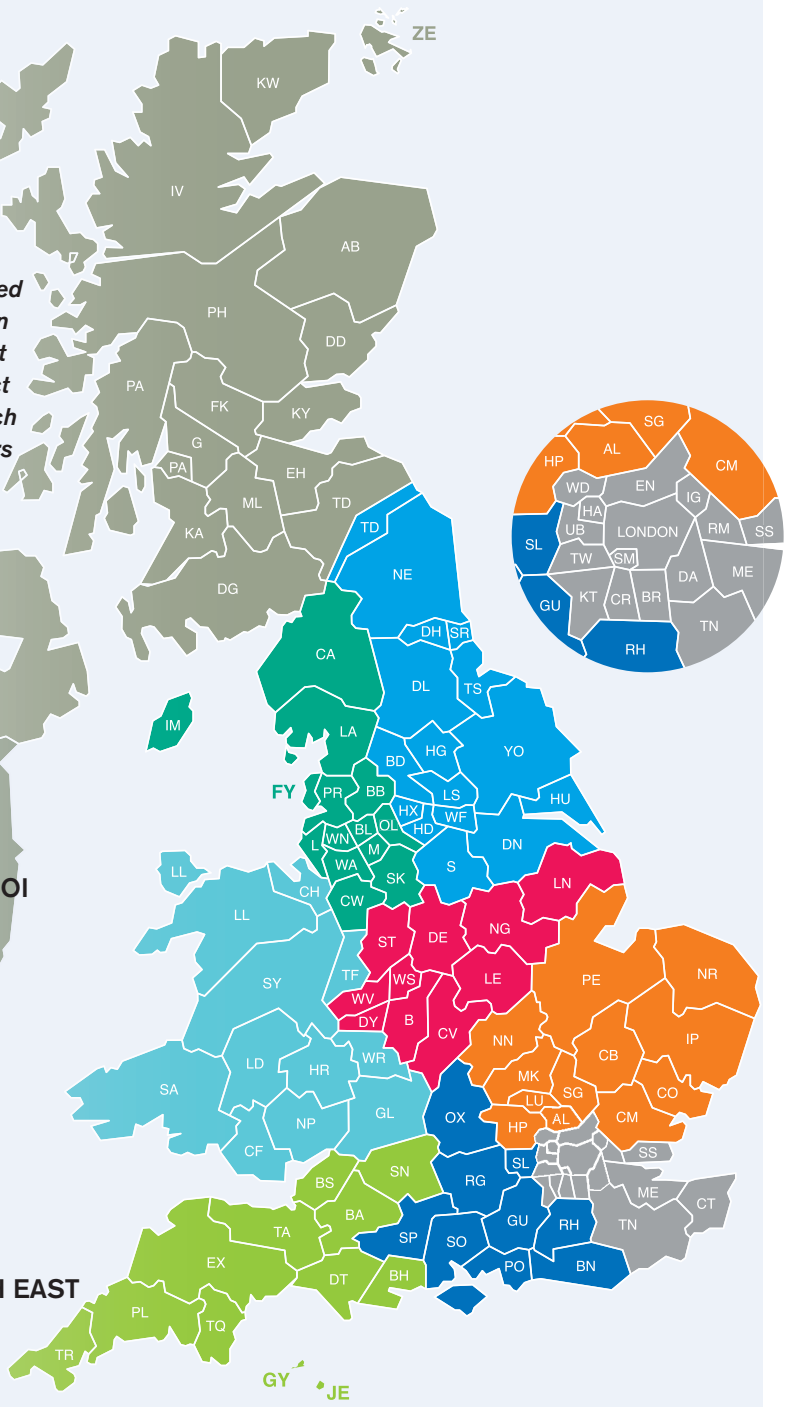
TITLE	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
BLESMA SUPPORT OFFICERS			
BSO (Prosthetics)	Brian Chenier	020 8548 7080 07796 715908	bsoprosthetics@blesma.org
BSO Eastern	Kevin Long	020 3954 3020 07825 536364	bsoeastern@blesma.org
BSO London & South East	Paul Findlay	01268 415290 07469 242277	bsolse@blesma.org
BSO Midlands	Sam Wileman	020 8548 7095 07825 536363	bsomid@blesma.org
BSO North East	Pete Shields	01469 532176 07908 667219	bsone@blesma.org
BSO North West	Mike Downes	01257 795144 07825 536362	bsonw@blesma.org
BSO Scotland, NI & ROI	Steve Burton	0131 2262910 07766 258461	bsosniroi@blesma.org
BSO South	Pat Donnachie	020 3954 3026 07741 846106	bsosouth@blesma.org
BSO South West	Steve Fraser	01278 789393 07788 312747	bsosw@blesma.org
BSO West	Tom Hall	020 8548 7098 07780 165085	bsowest@blesma.org
Members Living Overseas	Liz Watling	020 8548 3516	iwabenefits@blesma.org
BLESMA OUTREACH OFFICERS			
National Outreach Coordinator	Martin Gwillim	07741 891632	outreachcoord@blesma.org
Outreach Officer Eastern	Darren Fuller	07741 661159	outreache@blesma.org
Outreach Officer London & South East	Alida Horne	07741 845793	outreachlse@blesma.org
Outreach Officer Midlands	Vanessa Lucas	07741 845429	outreachmid@blesma.org
Outreach Officer Northern Ireland	Fiona Morrison	07741 744617	outreachni@blesma.org
Outreach Officer North East	Adele Miller	07741 847211	outreachne@blesma.org
Outreach Officer North West	Kirsten Morrissey	07741 846674	outreachnw@blesma.org

TITLE	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
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Outreach Officer South West	Sarah Payne	07741 737563	outreachsw@blesma.org
Outreach Officer West	Jason Suller	07741 744141	outreachw@blesma.org
INDEPENDENCE AND WELLBEING			
Members Support	Liz Watling	020 8548 3516	iwabenefits@blesma.org
Members Admin	Elaine Hems	020 8548 7093	memberadmin@blesma.org
Grants Admin	Susie Grainger	020 3954 3022	grantsadmin@blesma.org
Welfare – Direct Line		020 8598 9459	
ACTIVITIES			
Activities Manager	Jess March	020 8548 3519	activities@blesma.org
Membership Engagement Officer	Emily Mizon	020 8548 7094	meo@blesma.org
Activities Executive	Clare Wellings	020 3954 3021	ae@blesma.org
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Blesma by area

Have you got a question or need advice? Don't hesitate to get in touch with the Blesma Support Officer in your area. The contact numbers for all BSOs, Outreach Officers, and relevant members of staff can be found on p30.

- SCOTLAND, NI AND ROI
- NORTH WEST
- NORTH EAST
- EASTERN
- MIDLANDS
- WEST
- SOUTH
- SOUTH WEST
- LONDON AND SOUTH EAST



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