

From: Matt Rowe
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COVID19 Epidemic Update

The RAF Benevolent Fund is continuing to adapt to the current situation and has begun several new initiatives alongside established support for members of the RAF family.

In Cambridgeshire, Matt Rowe as Community Engagement Worker continues to remotely support veterans and their families across the county and receive referrals for veterans and spouses of all ages who are socially isolated.

Nationally the RAF Benevolent fund continues to offer support for a wide range of issues but have added additional support during the COVID19 epidemic.

Emotional Wellbeing;

Check and Chat calls- The RAF Benevolent fund has been carrying out Welfare Check calls to prior beneficiaries and are offering a regular 'Check & Chat' social call to any member of the RAF Family who lives alone or have a caring responsibility for a partner or loved one that they are isolating with.

Listening and Counselling Service- We continue to offer a course of counselling through our listening and counselling service for issues such as relationships, bereavement, anxiety and self-esteem. Additionally we now have a new **24/7 emotional support helpline** run in partnership with *Vita Wellness* who provide immediate, one-off emotional support from a trained counsellor. The service is available to all adult (18 +) members of the RAF family. Anyone using the service will just need to confirm that they are connected with the RAF either as a serving person, a veteran or a partner. They won't be asked for anything more than that.

We also offer access to Vita's online wellbeing platform. This is predominantly aimed at working age people, but there is a lot of information on there from wellness tips, budget advice, nutrition advice, as well as other wellbeing content to do with anxiety and depression.

The RAF Benevolent Fund can now offer access to 4 self-help programmes for people struggling with specific wellbeing issues. The modules are **Space from COVID, Space for Resilience, Space for Sleep, Space from Stress.**

Financial Support;

Requests for financial support continue with casework assessments being carried out remotely by our colleagues in RAFA and SSAFA. Additionally, eligible members of the RAF family can now self-refer for funds up to £750 by completing an on line application form. This can be found at the following link; <https://www.rafbf.org/how-we-help/veterans/financial-support>.

Legal Advice Helpline; We are working in partnership with *Law Express* to provide access to confidential and impartial legal telephone support. As a telephone helpline their advisors can offer advice and answer questions on a range of issues regarding UK law, including, employment, consumer, wills/probate, landlord & tenancy and family law. *Law Express* cannot look at documents or provide legal representation but they can talk through rights and options. Further information can be found at legal.advice@rafbf.org.uk.

Benefits advice and advocacy; we continue to offer advice and support relating to access to benefits and services.

All of these services can be requested via our welfare help line on **0300 222 5703** or by visiting our web site <https://www.rafbf.org/>

Please ask the question 'have you any connection to the RAF?' and refer those in need of support.

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