

April 2020

Dear Branch Member

**RAFA Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch Support to the RAF Association
Coronavirus Emergency**

Your committee are helping the RAFA response to the Coronavirus Emergency by first contacting Branch members who are known to be at high risk of serious illness from Covid 19 by this email and/or letter and, secondly, by email or letter to the rest of the membership. You may have already received information from central RAFA, but we would like to make sure you know how to make contact. Should you be suffering difficulties at home at this time, the following RAFA services are available to you.

Operation Connect. Under the banner of 'Operation Connect', The RAF Association has launched four emergency projects to support vulnerable members of our RAF community at this difficult time. Over 200 volunteers have so far been recruited and deployed to support these new services. The projects are:

a. **A Telephone Befriending Outreach Service.** This is proactively contacting high-risk members of our RAF community to check on their welfare and offer them regular friendship telephone calls from a nominated volunteer. If you could benefit from regular telephone friendship calls, please email opconnect@rafa.org.uk with your details, or call the Friendship Helpline below.

b. **A Friendship Helpline.** Anyone in our RAF community can call
0800 018 2361

if they are feeling lonely, isolated, in need of more specific support or simply want a chat with someone friendly who understands. Not having someone to talk during these challenging times can be very lonely.

c. **Emergency Bagdrop.** RAFA are providing emergency provisions of food and hygiene supplies to the doorsteps of the most vulnerable members of our RAF community. This is an emergency service. Those who have an ongoing requirement for supplies are initially provided with emergency bag drops, but are also referred to our welfare team who will assist them in finding a longer-term solution. If you become aware of anyone within our RAF community who is running out of supplies and cannot make their own arrangements for more to be purchased, please ask them for their permission to register them for the service, then email opconnect@rafa.org.uk with their details, or call the helpline 0800 018 2361.

d. **Project Entertain.** A daily RAF-themed online entertainment programme that people can look forward to as part of their routine while they are isolating, from quizzes to live-streamed sing-a-longs and armchair fitness sessions. So far, we have had over 1,000 guests taking part in our live sessions (brews, fitness, music, history). The programme can be found on the RAFA website, rafa.org.uk look for Op Connect and then Project Entertain.

As a member of RAFA, you know that the RAF Family helps each other. Please do take advantage of any of the above for help or entertainment. We hope you stay safe and send best wishes.

The Chairman and Committee
RAFA Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch

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