

# West Lothian



West Lothian  
Council



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# Foreword

## A message from the West Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Group

*As the members of the West Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Group we are delighted to welcome you to West Lothian.*

*The West Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Group works to ensure that the needs of current and former Armed Forces Personnel are considered in the delivery of local services, and to improving and strengthening the ties between those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces and the communities in which they work and live.*

*West Lothian is one of the fastest growing areas in Scotland, with an excellent track record in the delivery of high quality services. This guide offers some practical information about local services available, including housing, schools, health, money advice, volunteering and employment and further education for current and former Armed Forces Personnel.*

*We hope you find this guide helpful.*

**Councillor John McGinty, Chairperson  
West Lothian Armed Forces Covenant Group**



# Introduction

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West Lothian Council has made a pledge to support Her Majesties Armed Forces. As part of this pledge we have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant. West Lothian Council has produced this information booklet to help those leaving the Armed Forces settle in the area. Our aim is to make your move between Armed Forces and civilian life as easy as possible should you choose to live in West Lothian.

## The Armed Forces Community

What is the Armed Forces Community? The Armed Forces Community includes current and former Service Personnel (Regular, Reserve – Territorial as was – and National Service) and their families, that served in the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force, as well as members of the Merchant Navy who have served on board a commercial vessel in support of UK military operations. Any former member of the above may be referred to as a ‘Veteran’ or as ‘ex-Forces’.

## What is the Armed Forces Covenant?

The Armed Forces Covenant refers to a pledge made by the UK Government on behalf of the nation as a whole to ensure those Serving Personnel, Veterans and their families are not disadvantaged as the result of their service. It reflects an understanding that the duties, rights and responsibilities of members of the Armed Forces are different from the rest of society, that the demands, obligations and risks of the job are unlike those in any other occupation or Veterans and those currently serving should be treated fairly and supported when in need.

For more information about the Covenant go to [www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk](http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk)

## Is this booklet for me?

If you have served at least one day in the Armed Forces you are classed as a Veteran regardless of your rank, gender, age or reason for leaving. Whatever your discharge circumstances this booklet is to help you settle into your new life.

West Lothian Council also has a dedicated webpage for members of the Armed Forces Community [www.westlothian.gov.uk/wlafcc](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/wlafcc) which contains a whole range of useful information.



# West Lothian

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West Lothian Council is one of 32 local authorities in Scotland; it has 33 councillors, a workforce of 7,980 and an administrative centre at the Civic Centre in Livingston. West Lothian has a population of about 181,000 people. The county is predominantly rural but does have several bustling towns including Bathgate and Linlithgow and a thriving retail centre at Livingston, the county's largest town. The modern council area borders, in a clockwise direction, the council areas of Edinburgh, the Scottish Borders, North and South Lanarkshire, and Falkirk.

West Lothian has a rich history and heritage. The old county town was the royal burgh of Linlithgow which is home to the world famous Linlithgow Palace. West Lothian has always been a centre of industry; there were extensive coal, iron, and shale oil mining operations in the 18th and 19th centuries. The famous Five Sisters Bing is a reminder of a rich industrial past.

West Lothian makes a fantastic visit for many great reasons; our rich heritage, friendly towns, great shopping and wide open spaces. Discover places to visit, activities and events, food and drink and accommodation.

West Lothian Council has a user friendly website [www.westlothian.gov.uk](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk) and an online portal called MyWestLothian.



# Housing

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Finding somewhere to live can be a challenge for many people when they leave the Armed Forces. There are many factors to consider; this section will hopefully give you a better understanding of your options.

## Local authority housing

West Lothian Council can provide housing information and advice to everyone, whether you are a council tenant, an owner/occupier, a lodger, living at home, privately renting, a housing association tenant or even a landlord.

The council have a comprehensive web page at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/housing](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/housing) where you will find information about council housing and how to apply for it, private renting accommodation and housing associations. You can download their housing options booklet at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/19925/Housing-Options-Guide](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/19925/Housing-Options-Guide)

If you have any questions about housing you can email Housing and Building Services at [customer.care@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:customer.care@westlothian.gov.uk) or if you would rather speak to someone you can contact the Advice Shop on 01506 283000.

West Lothian Council have the following policy in relation to Armed Forces Veterans:

Ex-Service Personnel who have been seriously injured in action are given a high priority for adapted homes. This will be achieved through assessment of medical and other applicable housing needs.

Employment/residence connected to service will be considered in the same way as civilian employment/residence. This ensures Service Leavers can choose to apply as homeless in the area in which they have served, and where their families may have become settled.

Forces applicants may choose to advise when they are available for offer. This will prevent offers of housing being made before they receive notice of their discharge date.

Remember when speaking with these services to let them know about your service history.

## Buying a home

If you wish to buy a home but cannot afford the total cost, there are a number of schemes that might be able to help you.

The Forces Help to Buy Scheme enables Service Personnel to borrow up to 50% of their salary (to a maximum of £25,000) to buy their first home or to move to another property on assignment or as their families' needs change. More information can be found at [www.gov.uk/guidance/forces-help-to-buy](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/forces-help-to-buy)

The Scottish Government operates shared equity schemes which can help you to buy a home that is for sale on the open market, or to buy a new build home from a housing association or local council. Support is also offered through the Help to Buy (Scotland) Scheme to purchase a new build property from a participating builder. Funding for these schemes is provided by the Scottish Government and you can find out more about them at [www.mygov.scot/help-buying-home/](http://www.mygov.scot/help-buying-home/)

## Private renting

When leaving the Armed Forces you may wish to rent privately. For comprehensive information about private renting in Scotland visit the Scottish Government's web page at Private residential tenancies: tenant's guide at [www.gov.scot/publications/private-residential-tenancies-tenants-guide/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/private-residential-tenancies-tenants-guide/)

Homes for private rent can be found online through websites such as [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk), [www.citylets.co.uk](http://www.citylets.co.uk) and [www.lettingweb.com](http://www.lettingweb.com)

## Further housing advice

The Armed Services Advice Project (ASAP) [www.adviceasap.org.uk](http://www.adviceasap.org.uk) provides free, impartial advice to members of the Armed Forces Community.

You can also visit Housing Options Scotland and download their military matters booklet [www.housingoptionsscotland.org.uk](http://www.housingoptionsscotland.org.uk) or visit the East of Scotland Housing Hub [www.eastscotlandhousingoptions.co.uk](http://www.eastscotlandhousingoptions.co.uk)

Alternatively you can go to [www.mygov.scot/veteran-housing/](http://www.mygov.scot/veteran-housing/) and download the Scottish Governments Housing Guide. This guide also has links to charity organisation that can offer support and advice.

# Employment and Careers

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There are a number of ways to find work in West Lothian and below is a list of the support services that are available to help you to obtain employment.

## Access2Employment

West Lothian Council's unique service, Access2employment (A2E), provides West Lothian residents with support and information on finding employment, training and education.

Access2Employment offers a wide range of services including:

- \* Guidance on CV preparation
- \* Help with application forms
- \* Interview techniques advice
- \* Access to the latest vacancies and job search resources
- \* Advice on local training opportunities
- \* Free access to computers
- \* Information on funding to help you move into work

You can contact one of our advisors on 0800 032 9768 to get information and advice on all of the above. Alternatively, you can find out what services are available in your local area and how to access them by visiting [www.westlothian.gov.uk/access2employment](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/access2employment) and clicking on the box for your area.

## Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

SDS provides information, advice and guidance about employment and careers and work-based training programmes aimed at building career management skills. They support a wide range of pathways into work, including Modern Apprenticeships. There is an SDS careers centre based in Livingston.

For more information telephone 0800 9178000 or visit [www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/local-national-work/west-lothian/](http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/local-national-work/west-lothian/)

There is also an online service, My World of Work ([www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk)), which can assist you through every stage of your working life. You can access information on a wide range of subjects, including choosing a career, learning and training, applying for jobs and making a career change. You will find information ranging from researching careers to building your CV. You can also access specific information and assistance for veterans and early Service Leavers through the dedicated page at [www.myworldofwork.co.uk/support-armed-forces-leavers-and-veterans](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/support-armed-forces-leavers-and-veterans)

## Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is committed to supporting Veterans, Service Leavers, Serving Personnel, their partners and families. It provides a number of programmes and services to help jobseekers, unemployed people, those with disabilities and others who may need extra help in finding work.

Jobcentre Plus works closely with the Ministry of Defence and other partners to provide support to Service Leavers, including resettlement advice, job searches or training. They work closely with a range of partners, including Veterans First Point, Glasgow Help for Heroes, Poppy Scotland, and Right Management. The organisation has Armed Forces Champions based in each Jobcentre Plus district. Job search support and advice for those who have left the service is available in all job centres, and specialist advisers can assist Service Leavers and their families in overcoming more complex barriers to employment.

Visit your nearest Jobcentre Plus for help with finding a job and information on any benefits you and your family might be entitled to, or visit the website at [www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement)

You can find further information about the support services available at [www.mygov.scot/working-jobs/](http://www.mygov.scot/working-jobs/)

## StartScotland

StartScotland will work with you to give you all the tools you need to help you get ready for work. You will work with your dedicated personal adviser who will be with you every step of the way – working through your barriers and challenges to help identify what support you need to help you make the transition back into the workplace.

You will get:

- \* a personalised employment action plan to help you meet your goals while giving you access to a wide range of specialist support if required such as health and wellbeing, basic skills, personal development and lots more
- \* the opportunity to gain accredited and vocational qualifications such as Level 1 City and Guilds in ICT, customer services and much more
- \* support to help you build on your existing skills and attributes to develop a professionally formatted CV
- \* help with searching and applying for jobs
- \* help with preparing for an interview such as interview coaching and conducting mock interviews
- \* the chance to take part in suitable work placements, work trials or volunteering opportunities
- \* the self-confidence you need to progress in work

For further information call 0800 049 7061 or visit [www.startscotland.scot/your-journey](http://www.startscotland.scot/your-journey)

### **Working in your local area**

You can apply to work for your local council across a wide range of job roles and services. Visit My Job Scotland to view, search and apply for jobs in your area at [www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/](http://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/)

### **Regular Forces Employment Association (RFEA)**

REFA exist to provide life-long, life changing support, jobs and training opportunities to Service Leavers and Veterans, irrespective of circumstances, rank, length of service, or reason for leaving. Founded in 1885 and operating across the UK, they have the specialist knowledge and understanding to bridge the gap between military life and civilian employment.

For further information visit [www.rfea.org.uk/](http://www.rfea.org.uk/)

## Volunteering

When you leave the Armed Forces you may not want to step in to work immediately. You may instead want to do some volunteer work.

Volunteering can be a great and stress free way to learn a new skill or trade that you can then put to good use in your chosen career. Volunteering can also be fun and rewarding. It can be hugely beneficial for individuals as well as communities. It can increase health and well-being, reduce loneliness and social isolation and help foster a greater sense of belonging in your own community.

There are many ways in which you can volunteer in West Lothian.

The Voluntary Sector Gateway is committed to providing a gateway into volunteering for residents of West Lothian. They can help you find the ideal volunteering opportunity to suit your requirements.

For further information visit

[www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/volunteering.html](http://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/volunteering.html)

# Education

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## Schools and nurseries

For information about your local schools go to [www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2231/Find-a-school-or-nursery](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2231/Find-a-school-or-nursery) where you will find out what schools are in your catchment area and how to apply to these schools. There is also information on applying for schools outside your catchment area. You can also visit [www.westlothian.gov.uk/education](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/education) where you can find further information about the schools in West Lothian as well as nurseries and childcare, community centres and adult education.

## Early years learning and childcare

Funded early learning and childcare is free to parents with children aged 3–4 years. It is funded by the Scottish Government. For further information and to claim your funded early years learning and childcare place visit the council's website at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/apply-for-pre-school-and-school-places](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/apply-for-pre-school-and-school-places). More information about the scheme is available at [www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/](http://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/)

If you are eligible for certain benefits, you may also be entitled to funding for early learning and childcare if your child has turned 2. You can find more on entitlement and eligibility to childcare for children aged between 2 and 3 years old at [www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare/](http://www.mygov.scot/childcare-costs-help/funded-early-learning-and-childcare/)

Once your child qualifies for early learning and childcare, they will stay qualified.

## School age and stages

There are differences in the ages children start school across the UK. In Scotland children start in Primary 1 and move up to the next class each year through to Primary 7. All children in Primaries 1–3 receive free school meals. Children move up to secondary (high) school automatically after primary school. The secondary school curriculum has two phases – completion of a broad general education from S1–S3 and a senior phase from S4–S6.

## The school year

The school year is broken into three terms which will include public holidays and may include a mid-term break (schools will be closed for one or two weeks). Term dates will vary depending on the local authority area.

You can find term dates for your local school at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/schoolholidays](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/schoolholidays)

## My child needs extra support

Additional support for learning in Scotland is different to special educational needs in England. In Scotland we understand that children from Service Families may need additional support to overcome barriers to learning which may arise because of the nature of their parent's work. We have a Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, where you will find useful information about when your child might be entitled to extra support. This can be found at [www.enquire.org.uk/](http://www.enquire.org.uk/)

Contact the local authority as early as possible if your child has significant or complex learning needs. Educators will want to begin communication with the family and child before a school move, if possible.

Additional information can be located on the Forces Children's Education website [www.forceschildrenseducation.scot](http://www.forceschildrenseducation.scot). This is a dedicated site for Armed Forces families that provides information about schools and communities and has links to local authority sites.

# Adult Education

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## Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

The Scottish Qualifications Framework helps people of all ages and circumstances to access the education and training that is appropriate to them over their lifetime. It can help you plan your learning and develop progression routes to follow, whatever your situation may be.

SCQF has recently undertaken a project to map the qualifications of Veterans to the SCQF (Scotland's Lifelong Learning Framework) – initially focusing on infantry soldiers.

Some of the qualifications you gained while serving may be recognised on the SCQF or may be English qualifications and therefore you may be concerned whether they will be recognised and accepted in Scotland by employers or by educational institutions.

Full details can be found at <https://scqf.org.uk/support/support-for-learners-parents/support-for-veterans/>

If you are interested in starting a college or university course, there are many options to choose from both in West Lothian and Edinburgh.

## West Lothian College

West Lothian College is based in Livingston and offers a wide range of further and higher education courses to develop skills for employment and to enhance career prospects for those already in work.

For general enquiries telephone 01506 418181.

For information about courses go to [www.west-lothian.ac.uk/courses/](http://www.west-lothian.ac.uk/courses/)

## Oatridge College

Oatridge College is based in West Lothian between the towns of Livingston and Linlithgow. It is a partner in Scotland's Rural College. The creation of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) took place in 2012 by merging the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) with three respected partners Barony, Elmwood and Oatridge Colleges.

The SRUC exists to deliver comprehensive skills, education and business support for Scotland's land-based industries, founded on world class and sector-leading research, education and consultancy.

For general enquiries telephone 0131 535 4000.

You will find information about courses at Oatridge College at [www.sruc.ac.uk/info/20008/study\\_at\\_sruc](http://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/20008/study_at_sruc)

## **Edinburgh College**

Edinburgh College is one of Scotland's biggest colleges. It caters for approximately 19,000 students and has 4 campuses in Edinburgh and Midlothian. You can choose from over 700 vocational and academic courses from access to degree level and continuing professional development to help you achieve your future career ambitions. Edinburgh College provides flexible learning opportunities to suit all learning needs.

For further information about Edinburgh College go to [www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk/Welcome](http://www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk/Welcome)

## **Universities**

Edinburgh has four universities. You can get information about the universities and the courses that they offer by visiting their web sites.

### **Edinburgh Napier University**

[www.napier.ac.uk](http://www.napier.ac.uk)

### **Heriot-Watt University**

[www.hw.ac.uk](http://www.hw.ac.uk)

### **Queen Margaret University**

[www.qmu.ac.uk](http://www.qmu.ac.uk)

### **The University of Edinburgh**

[www.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ed.ac.uk)

These are just some of the colleges and universities in the area. You can find out more information on each of them by visiting their websites. All of the organisations mentioned have shown support for our Armed Forces Community and some have admission routes specifically aimed at ex-Service Personnel.

# Money, Benefits and Social Care

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## The Advice Shop

West Lothian Council provides a free, impartial and confidential advice service for residents of West Lothian called the Advice Shop the service is provided to help the people of West Lothian with a focus on alleviating poverty and promoting inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy.

Fully trained advisors are available to speak to daily in the Bathgate Partnership Centre. The Advice Shop also holds regular outreach sessions and roadshows in towns across West Lothian. The Advice Shop provides advice, information and support on a variety of subjects including money and debt, benefits and energy advice.

The Advice Shop is open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 5.00pm and on Fridays from 8.30am to 4.00pm.

For further information or to speak to one of the advisors telephone 01506 283000 or email [advice.shop@westlothian.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:advice.shop@westlothian.gcsx.gov.uk)

## Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is another organisation, based in Livingston, which offers advice, support and advocacy services. Though similar to the Advice Shop in many ways, in addition to money and debt and benefits advice, it also offers advice relating to work, law and courts, family issues, consumer matters, immigration and health.

For further information visit CAB at [www.cabwestlothian.org.uk](http://www.cabwestlothian.org.uk)

## Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

The DWP is responsible for most welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. They deal with the administration of a range of working age, disability and ill-health benefits. As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, the DWP has initiatives that help current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families access Jobcentre Plus services. This includes having an Armed Forces Champion in every Jobcentre Plus district that ensures that the DWP provides support that meets the needs of the Armed Forces Community.

For more information about the DWP and the Armed Forces visit [www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobcentre-plus-services-for-the-armed-forces-and-their-families](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobcentre-plus-services-for-the-armed-forces-and-their-families)

# Healthcare

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West Lothian is well catered for in terms of health care. NHS Lothian provides a comprehensive range of primary, community-based and acute hospital services for the population of West Lothian. West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership is a partnership between NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council developed to further enhance the delivery of integrated health and social care services to the people of West Lothian.

St John's Hospital at Howden, Livingston, serves the West Lothian area. It contains 543 staffed beds and a full range of healthcare specialties, including a 24-hour accident and emergency department, elective surgery and burns treatment. The hospital and A&E department are open 24 hours a day.

You can contact the hospital on 01506 523000.

## Registering with a local GP

When you have settled down in Scotland you should register your family with a local doctor (GP). Your GP will be able to care for your health conditions and provide treatment if you or a family member becomes unwell. Any prescriptions prescribed by your GP are free of charge.

All major towns and some larger villages in West Lothian have their own medical practices. You can find your medical practice at [www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/gp-practices?la=s12000040](http://www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/gp-practices?la=s12000040)

You can find more information about how to register at [www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/doctors/registering-with-a-gp-practice](http://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/doctors/registering-with-a-gp-practice)

## Registering with a dentist

Your family can get care, advice and treatment from NHS Scotland to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy. Dentists in West Lothian also provide free dental checks. You can find a dentist near you using the links at [www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/dental/receiving-nhs-dental-treatment-in-scotland](http://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/dental/receiving-nhs-dental-treatment-in-scotland)

## In an emergency

NHS 24 is Scotland's telephone service providing health advice 24 hours a day. The telephone service allows people who feel unwell or those caring for them to obtain health advice if it is not possible to wait until they can visit their GP when the practice is next open. You can call them on 111 if you are ill or need any health services. Alternatively you can also access their website at [www.nhs24.scot](http://www.nhs24.scot). The advice line is not intended as a substitute for obtaining an emergency ambulance service. For all life threatening emergencies you should still call 999.

There are other NHS services in the area and these can be found online at [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

## Mental health

NHS Scotland provides mental health services that offer a range of treatments and self-help advice for those experiencing mild, moderate or more complex mental health problems. The first point of call for accessing NHS care is usually your GP. You can discuss any issue with your GP, who can also arrange referral to more specialist services if that is necessary. You can find more details regarding support and services at [www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health](http://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health). There is also a free and confidential 24-hour helpline available for you to talk about mental health, which family members or carers can use too. You can access this through Combat Stress at [www.combatstress.org.uk/helpline](http://www.combatstress.org.uk/helpline)

## Veterans First Point (VIP)

VIP Lothian is made up of Veteran peer support workers, clinicians, therapists and an administration team. They provide:

- \* Peer support worker led caseload management of welfare issues
- \* Mental health assessment and treatment with both psychiatry and psychology
- \* Self-referral through afternoon drop-in, phone and email (we also accept referrals through GPs and other agencies)
- \* Peer support worker led activities including fly fishing, city walks, music groups, archery, etc
- \* In-house clinics from Citizen's Advice Bureau, Veterans UK and Edinburgh Housing Advice Project (EHAP)

For further information visit VIP Lothian at [www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk/drop-center/lothian](http://www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk/drop-center/lothian)

### **Lothians Veterans Centre**

The Lothians Veterans Centre is a charity that was designed to meet the need for a Veterans drop-in centre with no appointment necessary allowing complex needs to be catered for in an environment which is familiar and friendly.

For further information visit [www.lothiansveteranscentre.org.uk](http://www.lothiansveteranscentre.org.uk)

### **Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs**

To help tackle isolation and loneliness, there are a number of Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Clubs, including one in Livingston, for further details please visit [www.afvbc.net](http://www.afvbc.net)

There is also the Military Museum Scotland Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club. Generally they meet on the last Sunday of the month. They have a Facebook page and it is recommended that you check the page for up-to-date information.

### **Unforgotten Forces**

A consortium of organisations called Unforgotten Forces, which includes Poppyscotland, has been awarded funding the Aged Veterans Fund to undertake a 3-year programme of support for older Veterans over the age of 65 and their families in Scotland. The money will be used to improve the coordination of existing provision and introduce new services aimed at supporting older Veterans.

Unforgotten Forces is a partnership between 16 leading organisations that will deliver a range of new services and enhancements in areas including advice, access to healthcare, social isolation, respite, along with creative activities and events for those in care settings. The consortium has been awarded the funding to undertake this ambitious programme of work.

Poppyscotland is the lead partner and in addition to coordinating the consortium, the funding will enable Poppyscotland to offer more of its popular and hugely beneficial Poppy Breaks to older Veterans.

The portfolio includes services such as advice provision, support for those on the NHS pathway with transport being provided to appointments. Loneliness and isolation will be tackled through befriending, respite breaks and a newly created day centre.

For more information about Unforgotten Forces visit [www.poppyscotland.org.uk/get-help/unforgotten-forces](http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk/get-help/unforgotten-forces)

### **The Veterans Welfare Service (VWS)**

The VWS are tri-service and part of the MOD, providing lifelong support to Serving Personnel, Veterans and their families. They specialise in War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation claims. VWS also provide advice and practical help where there is a welfare need. For further information telephone 0141 224 2709 or email [Veterans-UK-VWS-Scot-NI@mod.uk](mailto:Veterans-UK-VWS-Scot-NI@mod.uk)

# Transport and Travel

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West Lothian has excellent transport links. To the north of the county is the M9 which will connect you with the towns of Falkirk and Stirling. Running through the middle of the county is the M8 which connects West Lothian with Scotland's two major cities, Edinburgh and Glasgow. There are also three major train lines with stops in West Lothian that connect you to all the major towns and cities in Scotland's Central Belt and beyond.



# Community Life

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West Lothian has a vibrant cultural and community scene with something happening in most of the towns in the county. Below are some of the highlights but to find out what is taking place in your area visit the council's web site at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/whats-on](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/whats-on)

- \* Linlithgow Palace will take you back in time to learn about the life and times of seven monarchs that called the palace home. For more information about Linlithgow Palace visit [www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/linlithgow-palace/](http://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/linlithgow-palace/)
- \* West Lothian has a vibrant gala season that starts in May and runs to the end of August. For information about your local gala visit the council's web site at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/whats-on](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/whats-on)
- \* Sports centres and swimming pools are located in several towns in West Lothian. For further information visit [www.westlothianleisure.com/](http://www.westlothianleisure.com/)
- \* Community centres are located in most of West Lothians towns and villages and offer a variety of events and activities for their community. Further information is available at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/search?q=community+centres&go](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/search?q=community+centres&go)
- \* Howden Park Centre in Livingston hosts music and theatre events and activities for visitors of all ages. It has a cafe bar and the venue can be hired for private functions such as weddings. Further information is available at [www.howdenparkcentre.co.uk/](http://www.howdenparkcentre.co.uk/)
- \* The Reconnect Regal Theatre in Bathgate provides a programme of music, drama, film and dance in the form of performances and classes. For further information visit <https://twitter.com/bathgateregal?lang=en>
- \* Burgh Hall, Linlithgow – whether you drop in for a coffee and snack, meet friends for lunch, want to see the current fine art there are lots of reasons why you should visit Linlithgow Burgh Halls. You could combine your trip with a visit to the nearby Linlithgow Palace. For more information visit [www.linlithgowburghhalls.com/aboutus](http://www.linlithgowburghhalls.com/aboutus)

# Purely Military

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There is a vibrant British Legion (Legion Scotland area) presence in West Lothian with active branches in Bathgate, Livingston and Linburn. For further information go to the following web pages:

**Bathgate:** [www.legionscotland.org.uk/bathgate-branch](http://www.legionscotland.org.uk/bathgate-branch)

**Livingston:** [www.legionscotland.org.uk/livingston-branch](http://www.legionscotland.org.uk/livingston-branch)

**Linburn:** [www.legionscotland.org.uk/linburn-branch](http://www.legionscotland.org.uk/linburn-branch)

## Regimental Associations

There are a number of ex-Service/Regimental Associations who meet within the Region, including, but not limited to:

- \* Association of Wrens and Women of the Royal Naval Service Edinburgh & District Branch
- \* Royal Artillery Association West Lothian Branch
- \* Royal Naval Association West Lothian Branch
- \* Royal Scots Association East of Scotland Branch

NB: most have web/social media pages for up-to-date information and contact details.

## Army Reserve Centre (ARC)

There are 2 ARC in West Lothian.

- \* ARC, Beveridge Square, Dedridge, Livingston EH54 6QF, which is home to 278 (Lowland) Battery 105 Regiment Royal Artillery and 243 Provost Company 1 Royal Military Police
- \* ARC, Torphichen Street, Bathgate EH48 4HH, which is home to A Company (Bathgate) Detachment 6 SCOTS

## Cadet Forces

West Lothian has a number of Cadet Forces Units within including:

- \* ACF: Squadrons in Bathgate, Broxburn, Linlithgow and Livingston
- \* ATC: Platoons in Bathgate, Broxburn, Linlithgow, and Livingston

The nearest Sea Cadet unit is located at South Queensferry.



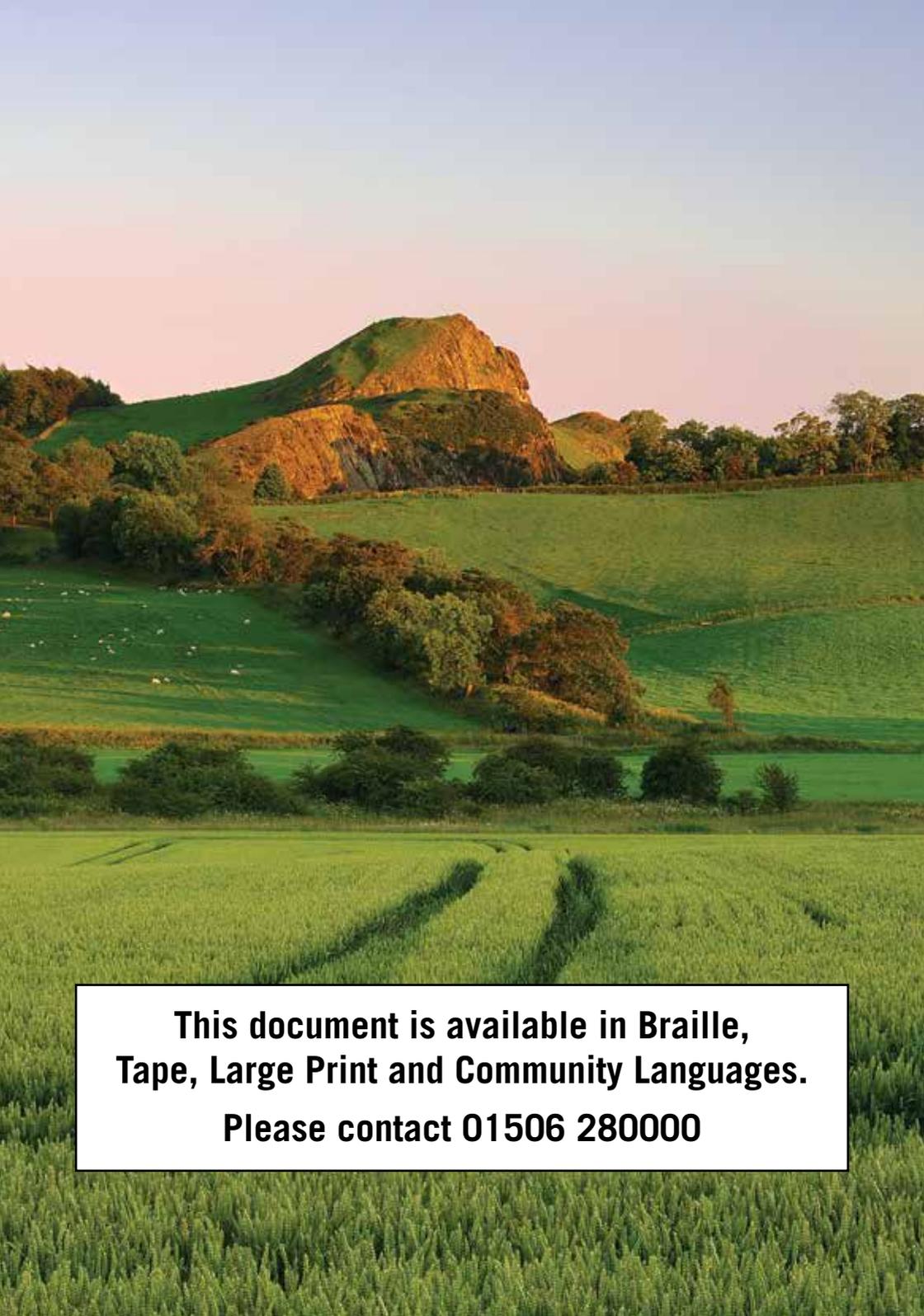
# Other Useful Information

We have a great network of organisations in Scotland which can help and support the Armed Forces Community. For example:

Organisation/Service	Contact Details/Information
<b>Royal British Legion Scotland (RBLs)</b>	<p>Head Office: New Haig House Logie Green Road, Edinburgh EH7 4HQ T: 0131 550 1583 W: <a href="http://www.legionscotland.org.uk">www.legionscotland.org.uk</a></p> <p>RBLs Branch &amp; Club Bathgate: 50 North Bridge Street, Bathgate EH48 4PP contact via Branch Secretary E: <a href="mailto:secretary@rblsbathgate.co.uk">secretary@rblsbathgate.co.uk</a></p> <p>RBLs Linburn Branch: contact via Area Secretary E: <a href="mailto:areasecedin@legionscotland.org.uk">areasecedin@legionscotland.org.uk</a></p> <p>RBLs Livingston Branch: contact via Branch Secretary E: <a href="mailto:rblslivingstonbranch@gmail.com">rblslivingstonbranch@gmail.com</a></p>
<b>Poppyscotland</b>	<p>New Haig House Logie Green Road Edinburgh EH7 4HQ T: 0131 557 2782 W: <a href="http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk">www.poppyscotland.org.uk</a></p>
<b>Veterans Scotland</b>	<p>W: <a href="http://www.veteransscotland.co.uk">www.veteransscotland.co.uk</a> or <a href="http://www.veterans-assist.org/">www.veterans-assist.org/</a></p>
<b>Combat Stress</b>	<p>T: 0800 138 1619 or Text: 07537 404 719 W: <a href="http://www.combatstress.org.uk">www.combatstress.org.uk</a></p>
<b>Veterans Gateway</b>	<p>T: 0808 802 1212 W: <a href="http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk">www.veteransgateway.org.uk</a></p>
<b>Armed Forces Covenant</b>	<p>W: <a href="http://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk">www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Veterans UK</b>	<p>W: <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk</a></p>

<b>Support in Mind Scotland</b>	6 Newington Business Centre Dalkeith Road Mews, Edinburgh EH16 5GA T: 0131 662 4359 W: <a href="http://www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk">www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity</b>	New Haig House 66 Logie Green Road, Edinburgh EH7 4HR T: 0131 557 1697 W: <a href="http://www.ssafa.org.uk">www.ssafa.org.uk</a>
<b>Veterans First Point (V1P)</b>	Argyle House, Floor K 3 Lady Lawson Street, Edinburgh EH3 9DR T: 0131 220 9920 W: <a href="http://www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk">www.veteransfirstpoint.org.uk</a>
<b>Armed Service Advice Project (ASAP)</b>	T: 0808 800 1007 W: <a href="http://www.adviceasap.org.uk">www.adviceasap.org.uk</a>
<b>Shelter Scotland</b>	Scotiabank House 6 South Charlotte Street, Edinburgh EH2 4AW T: 0808 800 4444 W: <a href="https://scotland.shelter.org.uk">https://scotland.shelter.org.uk</a>
<b>Lothian Veterans Centre (LVC)</b>	11 Eskdail Court, Dalkeith EH22 1AG T: 0131 660 5537 W: <a href="http://www.lothiansveteranscentre.org.uk">www.lothiansveteranscentre.org.uk</a>
<b>Families Federations</b>	Naval Families Federation T: 023 9265 4374 W: <a href="https://nff.org.uk">https://nff.org.uk</a>  Army Families Federation T: 01264 382324 W: <a href="https://aff.org.uk">https://aff.org.uk</a>  RAF Families Federation T: 01780 781650 W: <a href="http://www.raf-ff.org.uk">www.raf-ff.org.uk</a>
<b>Unforgotten Forces</b>	W: <a href="http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk/get-help/unforgotten-forces">www.poppyscotland.org.uk/get-help/unforgotten-forces</a>
<b>Veterans Community Support</b>	T: 0131 550 1560 E: <a href="mailto:support@legionscotland.org.uk">support@legionscotland.org.uk</a> W: <a href="http://www.legionscotland.org.uk/">www.legionscotland.org.uk/</a>





**This document is available in Braille,  
Tape, Large Print and Community Languages.**

**Please contact 01506 280000**