



RANGERS  
CHARITY  
FOUNDATION

# VETERANS AT EASE 2024 REPORT

THE ARMED FORCES  
COVENANT FUND TRUST  
*Funded by HM Government*



# ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Veterans At Ease – Rangers Charity Foundation’s mental wellbeing programme for veterans launched in August 2024. A 3-year grant for £50,788 was awarded from The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust under the Reaching and Supporting Armed Forces Communities programme, for this new initiative.

The first 14-week programme ran on Thursday afternoons. Participants were supported with travel costs to and from the Ibrox Community Complex. The programme aims to support veterans with their mental wellbeing, whether they be from the Army, Royal Navy or RAF. Participants have the chance to expand their social circle, build confidence and resilience and enhance their support network.

Sessions are delivered by the Foundation’s in-house Trauma Counsellor, Jane McLean, alongside one of our experienced community coaches.

Veterans also have the chance to increase self-esteem by developing coping mechanisms throughout the sessions. There is a focus on team building and forming camaraderie among the group whilst building trust between all parties.

The course is designed in a way that gives the group ownership over the topics they discuss in order that it can be tailored towards individual needs, empowering them to share challenges and experiences in a safe environment. All participants had the opportunity to progress through first aid and mental health first aid qualifications as well as engaging in weekly physical activity sessions in this first course.

Rangers Football Club and the Foundation jointly signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2016, pledging to uphold the key principles of the Covenant and support serving personnel and veterans.

Since signing the Covenant, the Club and Foundation progressed through the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) and were officially presented as the first British football club and club charity with the ERS Gold Award from the Ministry of Defence at a special ceremony in London in 2019, recognising the ongoing commitment to serving personnel and veterans.



# ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

**14** people completed the full Veterans At Ease programme.

**100%**  
of participants said attending Veterans At Ease helped them improve their mental wellbeing.

**90%** of people who attended the course said they had improved their social circle.

**80%** of attendees said they have developed new coping strategies through Veterans At Ease.

Since attending Veterans At Ease, a number of participants have benefitted from the below:

 7 people have engaged with other Veterans services

 2 people gained employment

 12 people are mental health first aid qualified

 6 people are being supported by our trauma counsellor

"The group helped me deal with some bad stuff that has happened recently in my life."

"It's given me a purpose in life."

"From a young boy, Rangers has been in my life but never did I think as a veteran that they would stand me up to help me in life. Staff are awesome and can't praise Jane and John enough an absolute credit to the club and most importantly to the veterans community that is so ignored in Scotland."

"I really enjoyed the course, it increased my confidence and self esteem as well helping me develop friendships with other people who also suffer with their mental health. I learned so much from the course and I'm so sad that it's over, but I know that everyone is still there to help me, including Jane who I am now seeing on a one-to-one basis. I'm feeling more hopeful about the future and I can't thank everyone at the Foundation enough for this. I truly believe that 2025 will be my year."

"The group has been great for me personally and at the beginning it was the only thing that I was getting out of the house for, after being isolated for the last couple of years. Thanks to the course and staff I'm now doing other things with the Foundation which is benefiting both my mental and physical health."



# STEVEN'S JOURNEY



Steven Davidson has praised the Foundation's Veterans At Ease programme and credited the course with aiding him take steps forward in his post-military life.

Steven talked about his military background as well as how he became involved in Veterans At Ease. He said:

"I was in the army and served in both Iraq and Afghanistan and my main role was in the cavalry. I've had other family members serve in the military so even since I was a wee boy I wanted to join the Forces.

"I first heard about the programme here through a friend. He had text me about it and I thought that I would get in touch with the Foundation and see what it was about.

He added:

"You obviously get used to that intense environment so it's always strange when you're no longer in that after you leave, and it can be hard to adjust and get back to what others would say is a normal life. Obviously, you'll have a different set of pals and your day-to-day is definitely not the same.

"I was a bit apprehensive before I started coming because I had been in group sessions before and I've ended up walking out because I couldn't really deal with it. With the other groups I felt that it was all about them and it was too much for me but here everyone was quite settled.

"Being able to talk about the topics that were coming up in the weeks ahead was good and having that contact through the week from Jane just to check up on you was a real help."

**"Any Veteran that has the opportunity to do this programme should go for it one hundred percent."**

"Sitting in a room with people who have experienced similar things to you is really important. A lot of other people won't know what the comings and goings are when you work a day in the military so having that network of people that have had that armed forces experience definitely makes things more comfortable."

Steven went on to say:

"As the weeks went on, I felt more settled, and I started to talk a bit more because I usually just sit and listen, but I felt more at ease as time went on and opened up a bit more. Obviously through our experiences there's going to be topics that are hard to take in but we got through it and the sessions were something to look forward to every Thursday.

"It's a course worth doing because since I've been here, I've learned new skills and gained qualifications like mental health first-aid. The most important thing is to enjoy it, relax and just try your best to take things in."

Steven was one of two participants chosen to lead the Rangers team out against Heart of Midlothian as the club marked Remembrance.

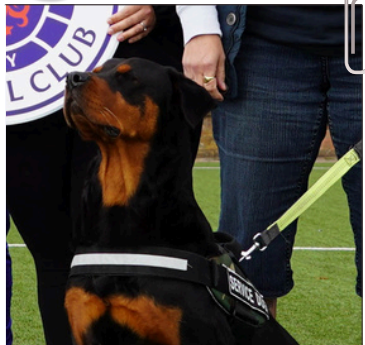
He said:

"To be honest I don't think I've ever been as nervous as that in my life and I was getting myself really worked up on the day of the game, but the day came round, and it was absolutely brilliant. My wee boy was in the crowd as well that day but he didn't know I was doing it, so it was a good surprise for him to see me too. I'll probably never experience that again, but it was out of this world."





*Rangers*



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*Veterans*



*At*



*Ease*



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