

The Bugle

February 2025



**Sight Scotland
Veterans**

Tackling vision loss together

sightscotlandveterans.org.uk

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A word from Gillian McDonald, Director of Operations

Welcome to the first 2025 edition of The Bugle!

As we step into the new year, let's take a moment to reflect on the highlights of 2024. Remembrance Day was a proud occasion for us all, with veterans participating in services across the country and representing us at the Cenotaph in London. Their presence was a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made and the strength of our community.

This issue also celebrates the ongoing success of our Digital Hub, which now supports over 90 veterans weekly. It's wonderful to see how this service continues to combat loneliness and isolation, providing a vital space for connection and support.

Looking ahead, we're calling on all of you to support our Fair Rail Campaign. Thanks to your campaigning, the long-awaited pilot scheme will be launched in the Spring for free rail travel for companions of people who have the eye +1 National Entitlement Card (NEC). To make sure the pilot is a success we need your help, so please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey and post it back to us in the free envelope provided.



Gillian McDonald

Director of Operations Sight Scotland Veterans

Our veterans proudly march in the Cenotaph Parade

Last November, 22 veterans travelled to London to take part in the Cenotaph Parade for Remembrance Day. This special day honoured those who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today and provided a chance to remember lost family, friends, and comrades.

For many of our veterans, taking part in the Cenotaph Parade is one of the proudest days of their lives.

Caption: Our smartly dressed veterans are proudly lined up in Whitehall getting ready to march in the Cenotaph Parade in London.



Caption: Our veterans gather in Horse Guards Parade in London prior to the Cenotaph Parade.



Caption: Alan Mustard and Andrew Keane are both smiling after sharing a joke ahead of the Cenotaph Parade.



Caption: Ian Hunter, Willie McKinlay and Billy Lyttle, are all smartly dressed as they get set to march in the Cenotaph Parade in London.



Caption: Army Veteran Colin McNally sits in his wheelchair prior to marching in the Cenotaph Parade. Colin was so proud and thankful to Sight Scotland Veterans for giving him the opportunity to march.



Caption: Willie McKinlay uses his magnifier to read his ticket for the Cenotaph Parade.





Caption: Tam Murney, Alan Mustard, Jack McVitie, Colin McNally, Davie Martin, and Jon McCallum, are standing proudly in the hotel in London getting ready to march in the Cenotaph Parade.

Royal Navy veteran returns to Cenotaph 50 years after first parade

John Finlay, 66, from Dalkeith, served as a Radio Operator in the Royal Navy from 1974 to 1979, stationed at the HMS Cochrane naval base in Rosyth. Now living with sight loss due to diabetes, John recently marked an emotional milestone: 50 years since he first took part in London's Remembrance Day Cenotaph Parade as a young recruit.

Last November, for the first time in half a century, John proudly marched once again, this time with Sight Scotland Veterans.

John explains: "Remembrance Day is about honouring those who gave everything for the freedoms we enjoy today. So many young people endured unimaginable sacrifices, and it's our duty to remember them."

John first marched in the Cenotaph Parade as a 15-year-old boy in 1974, only months after joining the Royal Navy.

"At that age, I didn't fully grasp the significance of what I was taking part in, I was focused on not making mistakes. I was proud, but I didn't appreciate the weight of it all. Now, 50 years on, I see it very differently."

During his time in the Navy, John travelled the world, visiting Halifax, Canada; Baltimore; Norfolk, Virginia; New York; Reykjavik; Malmö; Antwerp; Den Helder; and finally returning to Plymouth.

"Taking part in the Cenotaph Parade, especially half a century

after I first did so, is something I never thought I'd experience again. I'm incredibly grateful to Sight Scotland Veterans for this opportunity. It's an honour and a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by so many young people for our freedoms. This isn't just a march; it's a way of saying, 'We remember you. We'll never forget.'

"Being shoulder to shoulder with others who have served is a tremendous privilege. It's a proud, emotional moment, a chance to remember those who gave their lives for our country, and the friends and family we've lost along the way."

Marching with Sight Scotland Veterans holds deep significance for John, as the charity has been a lifeline, helping him rebuild his confidence and forge new connections. He is a regular at the Linburn Centre in West Lothian, where he has built friendships and discovered new passions.

John adds: "Sight loss can be very isolating, especially when you're also in a wheelchair, like I am. But the charity helps us connect and opens doors to experiences we thought we'd lost, like being able to march at the Cenotaph. I look forward to going to Linburn every week, I've made so many new friends and love all the activities. I can't thank them enough."



Caption: John Finlay is sitting in his wheelchair in front of the poppy wall at the Linburn Centre.

100-year-old D-Day veteran shares the importance of Remembrance Day

John McKusker, a 100-year-old veteran from Paisley, celebrated his milestone birthday in September. Born in 1924, John has lived through a century of change, hardship, and resilience. A veteran of the D-Day Landings during World War II, John reflects each year on the meaning of Remembrance Day, and why it's a day that holds deep significance for him.

"Remembrance Sunday makes me remember all the fellows who didn't make it back," John says. "It brings back all the times we fought together... I was lucky that my name wasn't on a bullet or bomb. I think it's very important that we don't forget all the people who gave their lives to save our country."

John's journey has taken him from his youth in Paisley to serving in the 51st Highland Division, and then to a quiet life on his own farm before facing the challenges of sight loss.

From farm to frontline

Leaving school at 16, John initially worked on a farm until he was conscripted into the Army at 18. He joined the 51st Highland Division, where he quickly acquired specialised skills, including Morse code and driving a Bren carrier; a type of armoured vehicle used for transporting mortar crews.

John landed in France just four days after D-Day, joining the Allied efforts in Arromanches. Over the coming months, he drove

mortar crews through Europe, from France to Belgium, Holland, and finally into Germany, playing a key role in supporting the advance against German forces.

After the war, John returned home, where his father helped him establish a new life by buying him a farm. He embraced the rhythm of farming, finding solace in the peaceful life it offered after the chaos of the war. For decades, he milked cows and worked the land, maintaining the farm until his retirement, when he moved to Winnoch 20 years ago.

In recent years, John encountered a significant challenge: the gradual loss of his sight due to age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Adapting to this life-changing condition proved to be difficult, but John has found invaluable support through our assistance.

Following a friend's recommendation, John was introduced to the charity, where he received both practical help and companionship. "This is a wonderful organisation," John remarked, "they have been so kind to us."

Marking a century of memories

John celebrated his 100th birthday with three days of celebration alongside family, friends, and neighbours. A highlight was a visit from a piper and the head of the British Legion Scotland, which added a special touch to his milestone.

"I had a great 100th birthday with three days of celebration with

family, friends and neighbours. A highlight was the piper who came out with the head of the British Legion Scotland. It's hard to believe that I've lived this long and witnessed so many changes."

Caption: John McKusker celebrating his 100th birthday sitting beside the head of the British Legion Scotland.



Caption: John standing at the door of his conservatory as a piper plays during his 100th birthday celebrations.



The Digital Hub: More than just a call

Loneliness and isolation can be tough, especially if you're living with sight loss. That's why we created the Digital Hub at Sight Scotland Veterans – it's designed to help you connect, chat, and take part in fun activities.

Every week, more than 90 veterans join the Digital Hub for virtual calls. These aren't just for entertainment; they're opportunities to build friendships, share experiences, and feel part of something bigger. Whether you're enjoying a lively quiz, having a friendly chat, or offering support to others, you'll find the sessions both uplifting and meaningful.

The Digital Hub proves that technology can bring people together, no matter where you live.

A lifeline for many

For many, these calls are a lifeline. They provide you with a space to connect with others who truly understand what you're going through. The support and camaraderie you'll find can help combat loneliness, lift your spirits, and give you a renewed sense of purpose.

Friendships that last

One of the most special things about the Digital Hub is how it helps you build real friendships. By connecting you with others who truly understand your experiences, it offers support and companionship that can make a real difference in your life.

Many of you who meet during the virtual calls stay in touch afterwards. Some of you even meet in person, turning those online connections into lifelong friendships.

For more information on the Digital Hub please call 0800 035 6409.

Digital friendships: Life-changing support for Veterans

For four veterans - Ann McLean, Jack McVitie, John Barber, and Helen Bennett - the friendships they've built through Sight Scotland Veterans' Digital Hub have been truly life-changing.

Meeting virtually every Wednesday, this small but close-knit group gathers to chat, support each other, and take part in lively quizzes. For them, these calls offer much more than just entertainment; they are a vital source of connection, belonging, and emotional support.

For John Barber, 74, who lives in Dunfermline and has macular degeneration, the group has completely transformed his life. Having grown up in care in Orkney, John, a former member of the Territorial Army, was devastated after the loss of his wife. His vision loss and grief plunged him into a cycle of isolation, leaving him housebound for more than two years.



Caption: Donna and Curtis from the Digital Hub hosting a quiz at the recent Sight Scotland and Sight Scotland Veterans Connect event in Stirling.

John explains: "When my wife died, I was extremely lonely and isolated, I just didn't know what to do. I had lost all my confidence and spent two years barely leaving my house, staring at the walls 24 hours a day. But Sight Scotland Veterans has changed my life. The Wednesday Digital Hub group is the highlight of my week. Before, I didn't speak to anyone all week long. I was so low, but now I've made real friends.

"I honestly believe the charity saved my life. I feel like a different person now, even though I still have hard days. Knowing there are people who genuinely care about you makes all the difference. The calls and the quizzes are the highlight of my week, and I just would not miss them. The fun and laughter we enjoy during these calls, it's just amazing and I can't thank them enough."

John recently visited Sight Scotland Veterans' Linburn Centre in West Lothian to meet up with his Digital Hub friends face-to-face for the first time.

"It was the first time I'd left my house in years, and it was an incredible experience. Meeting everyone face-to-face for the first time was very emotional—I enjoyed it so much. The Linburn Centre was fantastic, and seeing all the ways they support everyone was really impressive. The friendships and support I've gained from the Wednesday calls have given me the courage to start living again."

Since John's first visit to Linburn, his life has completely

transformed. He has moved into sheltered housing, returned to the Linburn Centre with plans to become a regular visitor, and even ventured out to his local pub!

Jack McVitie, a former police officer who lost his sight due to diabetes, agrees that the weekly calls have had a profound impact on his life. "The Wednesday call is chaotic and full of laughter, but most importantly, we support each other," Jack says.

"Before the charity stepped in, I was suicidal, I had lost my sense of purpose. But Sight Scotland Veterans gave me my worth back. Curtis and Donna from the Digital Hub team have so much enthusiasm, and you can tell they genuinely care about what they do."

Jack adds: "There are two reasons I get up in the morning: my alarm clock and these people. We contribute to each other's happiness, and that's something I'm incredibly grateful for."

Ann McLean, another member of the group, praises the support of the staff: "The staff are brilliant, they're our friends, our social workers, and a shoulder to cry on. They really brighten up my day. The calls have made such a difference to all of us."

Helen Bennett, who also attends Linburn Centre weekly, echoes this sentiment: "You can't really describe how much the digital calls cheer everyone up. They've helped me through some dark times. The support is just so important, and I'm incredibly grateful. It was amazing to finally meet everyone in person after all this time. Hopefully, we'll do it more regularly now. You can

see the difference it's made to John especially. We've all built up real friendships and we're like a little family now."

Curtis Campbell, Digital Activity Worker at Sight Scotland Veterans, Comments: "For these veterans, the Digital Hub is more than just a service, it's a lifeline. It combats the isolation that so often accompanies vision loss and provides them with a sense of community, purpose, and belonging.

Donna McIntyre, Digital Activity Worker, adds: "It's truly inspiring to witness the strong friendship these four have formed. It's a reminder of how important connection is in life, and the camaraderie they've developed is nothing short of remarkable."

Caption: Ann McLean, Jack McVitie, John Barber, and Helen Bennett pictured beside the War Memorial at the Linburn Centre alongside Donna McIntyre and Curtis Campbell from the Digital Hub.



Caption: John Barber and Jack McVitie are sitting down at a table after enjoying lunch at the Linburn Centre as Jason Duncan stands behind them chatting.





Caption: John Barber and Donna McIntyre standing in the woodwork room at the Linburn Centre during the groups tour of the centre.

Veteran's Champion visits Linburn Centre

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Councillor Robert Aldridge, has praised Sight Scotland Veterans for the 'incredible support' it provides to veterans living with sight loss during a recent visit to the charity's Linburn Centre in West Lothian.

The Lord Provost, who is also the City of Edinburgh's Armed Forces and Veterans' Champion, toured the centre, met staff and volunteers, and spent time with veterans benefiting from the charity's services.

Lord Provost Robert Aldridge said: "It was my pleasure to meet the team at Sight Scotland Veterans and witness the incredible support and achievements provided at the Linburn Centre. For over 100 years they have supported blind and partially sighted veterans in Scotland and it's truly inspiring to see the difference being made, and I look forward to seeing the organisation continue to grow and go from strength to strength."

Caption: The Lord Provost stands beside veterans, Ann and Kim, after they presented him with a Christmas garland at the Linburn Centre.



Caption: The Lord Provost is wearing a virtual reality headset during his visit to Linburn.



Caption: The Lord Provost, who is sitting next to Henry Tyrell and Helen Bennett, is throwing a white and orange jack during a game of bocchia.



Caption: The Lord Provost standing beside all the veterans and staff during his visit to the Linburn Centre.

Local opticians raise over £700 with 10,000-step challenge

The teams at Specsavers in Paisley and Barrhead have raised over £700 for Sight Scotland Veterans by taking on a 10,000-step walking challenge.

Both stores joined forces to take part in the walk to support the charity and their local activity centre, The Hawkhead Centre – located in Paisley.

The centre provides a safe space for veterans living with sight loss to socialise and become more involved in supportive activities and projects.

Lorraine Bruce, Hub Coordinator for Sight Scotland Veterans' Hawkhead Centre, comments: "At Sight Scotland Veterans, we are incredibly grateful for the support shown by the teams at Specsavers in Paisley and Barrhead. Their dedication to raising funds through the 10,000-step challenge means so much to the veterans at our Hawkhead Centre. The generosity of the local community and the efforts of the Specsavers teams help us continue providing vital care, support, and opportunities for veterans living with sight loss."

Gail Thompson, director at Specsavers Paisley, says: "The team worked so hard for this challenge to walk 10,000 steps, so it's fantastic to see how their hard work has raised so much for a fantastic cause."

“Both our Paisley and Barrhead stores are local to The Hawkhead Centre, so we see first-hand how important the work that Sight Scotland Veterans carries out in providing care, support and safe social surroundings for our veterans with limited sight or sight loss.

“I want to thank everyone in our local community who helped us raise vital funds to donate to this incredible cause, which means so much to our colleagues in both Specsavers stores.”



Caption: The teams from Specsavers in Paisley and Barrhead stand outside a Specsavers shop after completing their 10,000-step walking challenge.

Bringing the music back for veteran Bill

Bill Reilly, a veteran from Broughty Ferry who served in the Royal Artillery from 1954 to 1958, has always had a passion for music. As a lifelong organ player, music has been an integral part of his life. However, as Bill's eyesight began to deteriorate due to Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), reading sheet music became almost impossible.

Over the years, Bill adapted as best as he could. He relied heavily on his memory to play the organ, but as time went on, his desire to read music again became stronger. Although he was already using a Text-to-Speech machine to read his mail and other essential documents, it didn't help with reading sheet music.

"When I couldn't read the music anymore, I had to play from memory," Bill shared. "It worked for a while, but I missed being able to look at the notes. I wanted something that could help me read the music again."

When Fiona McCormick, a Senior Rehabilitation Officer at Sight Scotland Veterans, initially assessed Bill, she wasn't sure that a solution existed to meet his specific needs.

She explains: "At first, I was concerned there wouldn't be a way we could support Bill with this. Reading sheet music is different from reading letters or books. It requires precision, and I was worried that none of our usual methods would be sufficient."

However, Bill wasn't ready to give up. He had the idea to visit a friend who owned a CCTV video magnifier, a device that can enlarge text or images on a screen. Bill brought along some sheet music to test it out, and it worked. He could see the notes clearly again. Encouraged by this breakthrough, Bill's daughter contacted Fiona to ask if Sight Scotland Veterans could obtain a similar magnifier for his home.

Fiona comments: "When I found out it worked, I was thrilled for Bill, and we helped him set up a CCTV magnifier in his house. Bill adapted a space in his bedroom for the machine and after some trial and error to get the settings just right, he could read the music once again. I was so happy to be proved wrong, and his family are now busy printing out a long list of songs for him to play. This has made such an amazing difference to Bill's life"

Bill adds: "It's amazing to be able to read and play music again, instead of just relying on memory. I feel like I've got a part of myself back, I can't thank Sight Scotland Veterans enough for helping me."

Caption: Bill is sitting playing the organ with the CCTV video magnifier in front him displaying music.



Jason scales new heights for Sight Scotland Veterans

Congratulations to Hawkhead Centre Officer Jason Turnbull, who has completed his incredible '24 Munros in 2024' challenge - smashing his fundraising target of £500 for Sight Scotland Veterans!

Jason took on the challenge to climb 24 iconic Scottish mountains throughout the year, raising funds to support the life-changing work of the charity. He spent over 80 hours hiking more than 190 miles, tackling a total ascent of 40,000 feet, and even managed to climb seven Munros in a single day.

"I've seen first-hand the amazing work being done at Sight Scotland Veterans," Jason said. "I wanted to raise funds so more veterans can benefit from these services, and I'm so grateful for the incredible support I've received along the way."

A huge well done, Jason, you've truly gone above and beyond!

Caption: Jason Turnbull, wearing a yellow Sight Scotland Veterans t-shirt, stands at the summit of a Munro holding seven fingers up after he climbed seven Munros in one day.





Caption: Jason sits on top of some rocks with a stunning view behind him of mountains and lochs.

Veterans visit Lady Haig's poppy factory

Veterans from our Linburn Centre recently took a special trip to Lady Haig's Poppy Factory in Edinburgh.

The visit gave veterans a chance to learn more about the history behind Scotland's iconic poppies and see where these symbols of remembrance are made.

Founded in 1926 by Lady Haig, the widow of Field Marshal Earl Haig, the poppy factory has been creating poppies by hand for nearly 100 years. Much of the work is still done by veterans, and the factory still uses some of its original machinery. Every poppy and wreath is carefully crafted by hand, right down to the boxes they're packed in.

For many of the veterans, the visit brought back memories and taught them new things about the poppies they wear every November.

Navy veteran, Bob Hart, who worked at the factory in the 1970s, said, "It was great to go back. I learnt things I never knew when I worked there. I couldn't believe some of the old machinery was still there. I had a brilliant day!"

Army veteran, Tom Hedges, added, "It was very interesting finding out how the poppies were made. There was one poppy that had twenty layers to it. It was a great day."



Caption: Ian Young and Ian Hunter show off two red and black poppy wreaths during the visit to Lady Haig's Poppy Factory in Edinburgh.

Transfer of Attendance Allowance to Pension Age Disability Payment in Scotland

As part of the transfer of benefits from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to Social Security Scotland, Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP) will replace Attendance Allowance (AA). This non-means-tested benefit supports older adults with long-term disabilities, helping cover additional costs related to their care needs. The new Pension Age Disability Payment application process, managed by Social Security Scotland, offers accessible options via online, phone, and postal applications.

If you already receive Attendance Allowance, you will automatically be moved on to Pension Age Disability Payment; the transfer process will start in early 2025.

New applications for Pension Age Disability will commence as detailed below: -

- People who live in Argyll & Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney and Shetland can apply now as part of the pilot scheme.
- On the 24th of March 2025 the application process will extend to include Aberdeenshire, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, Na h-Eileanan Siar Stirling Clackmannanshire Falkirk Fife Angus Dundee City Perth & Kinross Moray
- On 22 April 2025, it will be available across all of Scotland.

If you wish support to apply for Pension Age Disability Payment, please contact our Information Line on 0800 0356409 and they will arrange for a call back from our Financial Wellbeing Team.

Peterhead activity day

Sight Scotland Veterans' Sport & Partnership team recently organised a sporting activity day event in Peterhead on the 24th of October 2024.

The event helped veterans in the area connect with each other, try out different sports and get involved with Sight Scotland Veterans.

On the day, we had 7 people and a furry friend who all had a fantastic time. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the activities and went home smiling.

We received lots of interest in our sports with one veteran looking to take up sailing, two veterans interested in swimming and another hoping to take up Archery.

The Sport & Partnership team are planning more events across the country to reach and help veterans who can't attend the Sight Scotland Veteran centres or Sight Support Groups.



Caption: Veterans enjoy a game of bocchia during the Peterhead event put on by the Sport and Partnerships team.

Exciting skiing opportunity for veterans

Are you a veteran who has always wanted to try skiing or would love to hit the slopes again? If so, we'd love to hear from you! Our Sports and Partnerships Team is gauging interest in organising skiing trips for veterans in 2025.

Please call our Sports and Partnership team on 0800 035 6409.

Veterans' activity centre opens in Forres

The Victoria Hotel in Forres has been transformed into the Erskine Veterans Activity Centre (EVAC), a hub of activity and support for veterans.

The centre features a variety of scheduled sessions, including art classes, IT workshops, and therapy activities. There's also plenty of room for socialising, providing a great opportunity to build friendships and enjoy a sense of camaraderie.

This new facility aims to combat isolation and loneliness by giving veterans a supportive environment to engage with others, learn new skills, and have fun. Veterans in the area are encouraged to visit, get involved, and make the most of this fantastic new resource.

For more information visit: www.erskine.org.uk

The power of AI - by Amy McAinsh, our new Assistive Technology Specialist



Caption: Amy McAinsh, who is wearing glasses, sitting at the Hawkhead Centre.

AI, or Artificial Intelligence, seems to be everywhere these days! It can be incredibly helpful for those of us with visual impairments, and it is increasingly being integrated into more apps.

What is AI?

In simple terms, AI refers to the ability to ask questions that would previously have required a human to answer. It involves machine learning, which means it is constantly improving over time.

How can this help me?

AI is now available in a range of apps, including Be My Eyes, Seeing AI, and stand-alone AI apps such as ChatGPT. Be My Eyes features a tool called Be My AI, which allows users to take or share a picture, with the AI providing a detailed description of the image, it can even read handwriting! Similarly, Seeing AI offers a similar feature, enabling users to ask follow-up questions about a picture the app has already described.

Using ChatGPT

ChatGPT can be a helpful tool for tasks like proofreading emails before sending them. Let's explore how this can be done.

You can start by composing your email, either through typing or dictating. Once done, simply copy and paste the text into ChatGPT. This can be accessed either as an app installed on your device or through a browser by visiting the website, just create an account to get started.

Locate the message field at the bottom of the screen and paste your email into it. You can then ask ChatGPT, either by typing or using voice input, to spell-check the email or reword it to make it more formal, for example. It will generate a corrected version that you can copy and paste back into your email's message field.

While AI can be a useful tool in many situations, it's important to remember that it doesn't always get things right. However, as it learns and improves over time, its capabilities will continue to develop.

Ultimately, it's just another tool at our disposal to assist us in managing everyday tasks.

If you are interested in learning more about using AI or using technology, please contact the Information Line on us on 0800 035 6409.

Working to make Scotland a fairer society

Sight Scotland Veterans' Policy Team work to make Scotland a fairer society for people with sight loss by campaigning for positive change.

Spring launch of Fair Rail pilot scheme

Thanks to your campaigning, we're proud to announce the pilot scheme for free companion rail travel will be launched in Spring 2025.

Working closely with ScotRail and Transport Scotland, the long-awaited pilot will see those with the eye +1 National Entitlement Card (NEC) entitled to bring a companion with them on the train at no extra cost.

We know the current policy where discounted or free travel is being offered for some journeys and not others, has caused great confusion and frustration. With a national policy in place come Spring 2025, free companion travel will apply to all journeys across Scotland – no matter where you and your companion are travelling.

To make sure the pilot is a success, we need your help! Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey and post it back to us in the free post envelope provided. Sharing your views and experiences will demonstrate why free companion travel is needed and the difference this will make to so many people with sight loss.

The launch of the pilot project is a huge win and takes us one step closer to more accessible and affordable transport for blind and partially sighted people. Well done to everyone involved!

If you're severely sight impaired and think you might be entitled to an eye +1 National Entitlement Card (NEC) please contact your local authority to find out how to apply.

Got a campaign idea?

Feel free to contact us at policy@sightscotland.org.uk with any ideas or thoughts about campaigns that matter to you.



Caption: A visually impaired veteran with a white cane stands next to their companion at a platform at Haymarket Station in Edinburgh.

Would you be interested in Blind Yoga?

Sight Scotland Veterans is excited to announce the launch of yoga classes specifically designed for individuals living with vision impairment.

These sessions will provide a safe and inclusive space for blind and partially sighted veterans to experience the numerous physical and mental benefits of yoga.

Led by Tamas Danyi-Nagy, an experienced Community Activity Worker and yoga instructor, these classes are the first of their kind in Scotland. Tamas, who has been living in Musselburgh since moving from Hungary nine years ago, has developed a programme tailored to meet the needs of those with vision loss.

"All exercises are seated and adapted for people with sight impairments," says Tamas. "Yoga can help ease the stress of living with vision loss, improve mobility, and promote relaxation. My sessions are calming, social, and accessible to all, no matter their age or physical ability."

The classes include gentle movements for the shoulders, arms, neck, back, and legs, along with eye exercises to reduce tension and improve peripheral vision.

For more information on the upcoming blind yoga sessions for 2025 please call 0800 035 6409 or email tamas.danyinagy@sigtscotland.org.uk



Caption: Tam leads a blind yoga class; all members of the class are sitting on chairs with their hands over their eyes.

Join our General Veterans Forum

Sight Scotland Veterans is looking for new members to join the General Veterans Forum, helping us shape and improve our services. The forum provides an opportunity for you to share feedback, ideas, and suggestions about our work.

Each representative on the forum is a veteran with a visual impairment who also receives support from our organisation. They work with other veterans and our teams to ensure services meet the needs of the community.

We are keen to bring fresh perspectives to the forum and encourage veterans from across Scotland to get involved. If you'd like to take part, please contact us on 0800 035 6409 to find out more. Your input can make a real difference.

Veterans Sight Support Groups

You are invited to attend our Veteran Sight Support Groups!

Sight Scotland Veterans' Sight Support Groups help veterans with visual impairments build connections, share experiences, and receive practical advice. These groups provide a supportive environment where you can:

Connect with peers: Meet others who understand the challenges of living with sight loss.

Share experiences: Discuss personal experiences and learn from others' coping strategies.

Access information: Receive tailored advice on managing daily life with vision impairment.

Engage in activities: Participate in social events, hobbies, and skills sessions to boost confidence and independence.

Emotional support: Benefit from the camaraderie and mutual encouragement within the group.

We have Sight Support Groups running all over the country, including across the Central Belt, Highlands, Northeast, Borders and the South West. To find out where your nearest group is please call our Sight Loss Information Line on 0800 035 6409.

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**Sight Scotland
Veterans**

Tackling vision loss together