



The Royal Engineers Association

Benevolence Handbook

2020

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Motto

The motto of the Association is "SERVICE - NOT SELF".

Aims

The Aims of the Association may be interpreted to be:

a. To promote and support the Corps among members of the Association in the following ways:

(1) By fostering esprit de corps and a spirit of comradeship and service.

(2) By maintaining an awareness of Corps traditions.

(3) By acting as a link between serving and retired members of the Corps.

b. To provide financial and other assistance to serving and former members of the Corps, their spouses, widows, widowers and dependants who are in need through poverty.

c. To make grants, within Association Guidelines, to the Army Benevolent Fund and to other charities that further the objectives of the Association.

Vision

Our vision is to ensure that all members of the Sapper family have access to comradeship and support that enables them to live full lives.

Our Mission

Is to reach out to all members of the Sapper family and provide support to those in need by maintaining the links between all serving soldiers, veterans and families.

Family

The Sapper family are the focus of all our activities; we are fully committed to realising the welfare needs of our serving soldiers, veterans and families.

Respect

We respect the needs, experience and diversity of individuals and are committed to providing a compassionate and caring environment where the contribution of everyone is valued.

Eligibility for Benevolence assistance from the Royal Engineers Association

The following aim of the Association is relevant to basic eligibility criteria:

To provide financial and other assistance to serving and former members of the Corps, their spouses, widows, widowers and dependants who are in need through poverty.

To be a serving or former member of the Corps that person must have served at least one day in the Royal Engineers. Membership of the REA does not qualify the member for benevolence.

Who is a dependant? A dependant is:

- **A husband or wife of a serving or former member of the Corps**
- **A civil partner (same or opposite sex relationships) of a serving or former member of the Corps**
- **Children of eligible persons who are aged under 18**

The husband/wife/partner of a serving or former member of the Corps who then remarries or forms a new relationship with a non-eligible person may not be eligible for future assistance from the REA.

QGEA/REA Members; When considering an application for Benevolence assistance for a joint QGEA/REA member support will be requested from QGEA association funds and other military charities.

Eligibility for assistance from the REA does not mean that assistance will be routinely provided. Each case submitted to the REA will be considered on its merits.

Background

The question 'when is a member of the Corps eligible for benevolence assistance' is often asked and the answer is given as 'when the applicant has served one day in the Corps'.

Almost all of our requests come from those listed on the REA membership database, as contributors to the Day's Pay Scheme (DPS) or who are known to us through previous benevolence cases. In this respect, a day's service in the Corps is easy to determine.

There are cases, however, where it is not so easy to determine eligibility. So, at what point does a person who joins the Army and is signposted to the Corps become a member of the Corps?

Regular Army

For the Regular Army, there are three points of entry where an event occurs that is used to determine when a person becomes a member of the Corps.

- Officer entrants – Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
- Adult soldier entrants through ATC Pirbright or ATR Winchester
- Junior soldier entrants through AFC Harrogate

For officer entrants to the Corps, the first day of service in the Corps is the day of their commissioning into the Corps. This will be documented in The London Gazette.

For adult entrants through either ATC Pirbright or ATR Winchester, or junior entrants through AFC Harrogate, the REA considers their first day of service in the Corps as the day of their pass-off parade from their respective training establishment. This will always be after they have successfully completed Phase 1 training.

Reserve Army

For the Reserve Army, there are a variety of points of entry where an event occurs that are used to determine when a person becomes a member of the Corps

Reserve officer entrants – Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

- Reserve soldier training through ATR Pirbright, ATR Grantham and a further eight regional Army Training Units

For Reserve officer entrants to the Corps, the first day of service in the Corps is the day of their commissioning into the Corps. This will be documented in The London Gazette.

For Reserve soldier entrants, regardless of the entry point, there is one common event that is used by the REA to determine when a person becomes a member of the Corps, as with the Regular Army, it is when they have successfully completed Phase 1 training.

General

Soldier recruits who have failed to achieve trained soldier status or officer cadets who have not been commissioned into the Corps will not be considered as eligible for benevolence from the Royal Engineers Association. Officer cadets attending university prior to RMAS may hold RE 'sponsorship' but this is not a formal acceptance into the Royal Engineers and is more a mechanism to nurture potential Sandhurst candidates. Individuals in this situation will not be recognised as eligible for benevolence assistance. Other service charities may consider them eligible for assistance.

Past requests for assistance have shown that eligibility criteria is particularly difficult to confirm for Reservists who have served in a number of different Arms for short periods of time. VOS documents provided by Historic Disclosures in Glasgow may indicate that the soldier has served with the RE and other Arms. The length of service shown with each Arm often appears too short for trained soldier status to be attained and in these cases,

applicants requesting assistance from the REA will be asked to confirm in some manner their status as a trained soldier during their time with a Reserve Engineer unit.

REA Verification of Service (VOS) criteria

When considering the eligibility of clients for benevolence we have to verify that the client served in the Corps of Royal Engineers. To this end, we need clear and unambiguous VOS. These notes should assist caseworkers in determining the means of VOS required.

- To be eligible for benevolence from the REA the client must have served for at least a day in the Corps of Royal Engineers. This applies to reservists as well as regulars.
- We are aware that many caseworkers have not served in the Forces and there will be an understandable gap in their military knowledge. For instance, there is often confusion between the Royal Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) and the Corps of Royal Engineers (RE); these are two separate organisations. We are more than happy for caseworkers to contact us, either by phone or email, to discuss any queries they may have about military units or to discuss eligibility of a particular client.
- Royal Engineer units often have attached personnel on their strength to enable them to carry out their role. In the past, this will have included members of the Army Catering Corps (ACC), REME, Royal Army Pay Corps (RAPC) and others. More recently, this will also include members of the Adjutant Generals Corps (AGC), the Royal Logistics Corps (RLC) and the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS). Unless they have served for at least a day in the Corps of Royal Engineers, attached personnel who have only served on the strength of an RE unit do not qualify for REA benevolence.
- Some members of the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) who served as Postal & Courier Operators with the RE are eligible. On 6 April 1992, WRAC Postal & Courier Operators were re-badged as members of the Corps of Royal Engineers and remained with the Corps until the Postal & Courier Services were transferred to the newly formed Royal Logistics Corps (RLC) on 6 April 1993. WRAC members re-badged RE during this time are eligible for REA benevolence.
- We do not accept medals as VOS. There may be scope for considering inscribed medals for WW2 veterans.
- We do not accept photographs of individuals wearing military uniform as VOS.
- We have a database of over 70,000 REA members or former members that includes service numbers. Unless a copy of a page from a service document is included with the MOSAIC case or paper Form A¹ that clearly shows the client as having served with the RE, we will interrogate our membership database to try and match the service number. If there is no match, we will request VOS from the caseworker. If

¹ Form A refers to either the form completed on the MOSAIC system by a caseworking organisation as part of the request for assistance case or a paper Form A completed by organisations who are not MOSAIC system users.

If VOS cannot be obtained from the client, the caseworker should submit the COBSEO 'Verification of Service' form to MOD Disclosures.

- The response to 'Means of Verification' requested in Section 4 of the MOSAIC case or paper Form A is generally 'Service Book' or 'Service Document'; we regard this description as insufficient. The provision of evidence by the client for inclusion in the MOSAIC case or paper Form A is the preferred means of VOS by us and other Associations.
- Where there is any doubt about VOS we will require sight of documentary evidence; this does not mean the provision of a detailed copy of the client's service record documents.

HOW TO APPLY

The REA has a first class system for delivering benevolence where it is needed.

Our main eyes and ears on the ground for advising us of those in need are SSAFA, The Royal British Legion (TRBL) and RE Unit Welfare Officers (UWO – for serving RE personnel).

HQ REA is unable to deal with requests for assistance directly from those in need. There is strict eligibility criteria for those seeking assistance from the REA and all applicants are required to provide Verification of Service (VOS) to the caseworker to confirm eligibility.

Anyone seeking assistance from the REA should follow the procedure outlined below, **although RE Unit Welfare Officers can deal direct with HQ REA by submitting a current version Form A via email to REA HQ. However, as explained below it is better to use a SSAFA or TRBL caseworker as other charities will be able to support the case.**

For ease of reference, we will use the term 'client' to identify the person in need.

- The client should contact either SSAFA or TRBL and request a visit from a caseworker. Contact telephone numbers for both organisations can be found online www.ssafa.org.uk and www.britishlegion.org.uk
- There may be cases where the client is unable to contact either SSAFA or TRBL, in this case a third party who has identified a person in need should advise either SSAFA or the TRBL that a person may need assistance.
- The caseworker will visit or telephone the client and conduct an interview to determine the needs of the client. This information gathered is used to complete what is known as a 'Form A'. This form is uploaded as an electronic case on the MOSAIC system. This procedure is required by our Trustees and we cannot process any application for assistance without the 'Form A'.
- Section 2 declaration (Section 13 on non-MOSAIC cases) must be completed on the Form A and input to MOSIAC (or attached to an email in the case of organisations not on MOSIAC) even if the case working organisation attaches their own data authorisation (e.g. TRBL). The REA cannot proceed with the case until this is received.
- The completed MOSAIC case is sent via the internet to a number of charities who may be able to assist. If the client is eligible for RE benevolence then the case will certainly be sent to HQ REA at Chatham. The information provided in the case is that which charities will consider during their case assessment.
- The case will be assessed by the Chief Executive REA and, if appropriate, an award will be made to the client via the caseworker.
- The Chief Executive REA is permitted to make awards up to the value of £1000. In cases where a higher award is required, the case will be considered by the REA

Benevolence Committee at one of their meetings or, if urgent, by an out-of-committee process.

- No cash is paid to the client; all assistance is procured by the caseworker organisation.
- Please do not email or telephone REA HQ with direct requests for benevolence as we will not be able to assist. As stated above, we can only assist through a case working organisation or Unit Welfare Officer.
- Further information about the provision of benevolence by the REA can be obtained by contacting HQ REA on 01634 847005 www.reahq.org.uk

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE:

REA Benevolence aims to provide financial and other assistance to serving and former members of the Corps, their spouses, widows, widowers and dependants who are in need through poverty. Benevolence should be seen as 'a hand up, not a hand out'.

The REA is able to assist with the following:

- ❖ Payment of rent, council tax and other utilities bills (including water) or arrears that are considered priority debts.
- ❖ Bankruptcy fees or Debt Relief Orders where recommended by a recognised Benefits and Money Advisor. (for example, Stepchange or Citizens Advice Bureau)
- ❖ Purchase of essential needs such as clothing, essential household goods and in emergency situations, food.
- ❖ Contributions towards the cost of Electrically Powered Vehicles (EPV) i.e. scooters or wheelchairs, stair lifts, bath lifts, riser/recliner chairs, profiling beds and other medical aids not supplied by NHS.
- ❖ Contributions towards convalescent/respite holidays for the sick, elderly or infirm and/or their carers.
- ❖ Essential house repairs/maintenance such as rewiring, decorating, replacement doors or windows of private properties that cannot be done by grants from Local Authorities. Apart from essential interior decorating this does not apply to Local Authority or private lets.
- ❖ For the elderly/sick/disabled – bathroom/wet room or kitchen adaptations that cannot be done by the Local Authority or where unnecessary delay is imposed.
- ❖ Small grants towards essential tools of trade, course fees to enable training for other/better employment. Please note the following:
 - A confirmed job offer must be provided in the case of benevolence requests for course/training fees.
 - A business case must be provided in the case of self-employment.
- ❖ Weekly annuities (£55.00pw) for people over 70 years of age, living in their own homes on low incomes and in receipt of all eligible state benefits. A new Form A or MOSAIC case must be submitted every 12 months for weekly annuity clients.
- ❖ Weekly annuities (£48.00pw) for people over 70 years of age as 'top-up' fees for elderly/infirm living in Local Authority or Private Nursing/Residential homes after all State benefits are in place, and who have savings below the recognised state limits. A new Form A or MOSAIC case must be submitted every 12 months for weekly annuity clients.

- ❖ Payment towards spectacles or dental treatment if applicant is in receipt of Universal Credit.
- ❖ Funeral expenses payment where an application for State Benefits has been made; a contribution may be made up to £500 or more, in exceptional circumstances.
- ❖ Repatriation costs for immediate family for compassionate reasons or medical need. Assistance will not be provided for uninsured persons.
- ❖ RE soldiers who originate from the Commonwealth can, in exceptional circumstances, apply for flights to a family funeral or immediate family illness. They can also apply for a contribution towards immigration/citizenship costs to stay in the UK.
- ❖ Contribution towards specialised medical treatments not available through the NHS where urgent need has been identified by a recognised medical specialist.
- ❖ Education of dependent children between the ages of 0-25 meeting the criteria of the RE Kitchener Fund
- ❖ Anyone serving a prison sentence. However, the REA's main consideration is given to assisting with pre-release courses that enhance the client's employability upon release. Help may be given to dependents at home.

REA is not able to assist with the following:

- ❖ Repayment or clearance of debts to finance loan /credit card companies, banks or building societies. These are classed as non-priority debts.
- ❖ Repayment of mortgage or arrears of mortgage other than in exceptional circumstances such as threat of eviction of elderly/sick people or families with young children.
- ❖ Grants to purchase, repair or support running costs for motor vehicles. Rules may be relaxed for deposits on Motability cars for essential medical needs.
- ❖ Home improvements or adaptations where there is no medical/compassionate reason.
- ❖ Private medical or dental treatment and medicines or appliances available on the NHS.
- ❖ Payment of legal fees, fines or court orders except for Bankruptcy fees or Debt Relief Orders.
- ❖ Private education
- ❖ Uninsured travel costs related to leave and holiday
- ❖ Medical expenses incurred as a result of uninsured travel or holiday.

- ❖ Benevolence requests where a client has sufficient savings/funds and is not considered to be in hardship.
- ❖ Retrospective costs where the client or family has already paid the invoice.
- ❖ Repayment of personal loans between family members or friends.

Payment of financial assistance

All decisions made in respect of applications from former RE personnel and their dependants are made on MOSAIC where appropriate, with an offer of assistance where a grant has been approved along with any necessary information for disbursement (such as a request for further action to be taken).

All awards made to serving personnel will be made to the appropriate regimental bank account by BACS; the notice of grant made will be emailed to the Unit Welfare Officer (where the original request has originated from the Unit Welfare Officer).

Grants are normally paid by BACS once a week with payments reaching the nominated bank account by Friday of the same week. Once payment has been made, receipts of payments are noted by the case working organisation on the MOSAIC case.

Weekly annuities are paid by BACS credit directly to the case working organisation or individual's bank account on a quarterly basis. (January, April, July, October)

Overseas clients are paid by IBAN via their case working organisation.

Christmas grants paid in December are either paid as part of the quarterly annuity or as a one off payment to clients in receipt of a Christmas grant only.

REA banking details:

RE Association

Lloyds

A/C: 00635296

SORT CODE: 30-11-75

Charity Number: 258322

Case submission checklist

REFERENCE	✓
ELIGIBILITY - Establish and record RE service details on the Form A. Ensure that the Service verified box is completed, if applying for service record, include copy of VOS request to APC Glasgow.	
INCOME – All household income (including contributing adults residing at the premises should be completed on the Form A net (i.e. after deduction of income tax/National Insurance contributions) All figures should be shown as weekly and converted to £ sterling if in overseas currency (including € EURO)	
PROOF OF INCOME – For example, copies of DWP benefits or similar, letters, payslips or three month's recent bank statements.	
HIGH EXPENDITURE – if any individual items of weekly expenditure are high, this should be explained in the application narrative	
APPLICATION NARRATIVE – Caseworker report Should provide a full application narrative (factual not anecdotal or with personal judgements)	
QUOTES – Two quotes for each item or items requested should be obtained. <i>(to be aligned with application narrative)</i> Three quotes are required for requests over £10,000.	
PROPERTY ADAPTATIONS – has application been made to the local authority for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)/Local Improvement Grant (Scotland)	
OT ASSESSMENT – An OT (Occupational Therapist) should have visited and made recommendations for property adaptations and/or mobility equipment such as riser recliner chairs, wheelchairs, mobility vehicles, stair lifts)	
FUNERAL EXPENSES – Has a Funeral Grant been applied for either through DWP (England & Wales) or Dept. for Communities (NI) and a copy of the response and funeral directors invoice forwarded with the application? The death certificate should be attached to the case.	
PRIORITY DEBT (Rent/Utility/Council Tax arrears) – Documentary evidence of debt detailing amounts outstanding/court action dates etc. If there is substantial debt, then a copy of a specialist debt advice report should be included.	
RENT/DEPOSIT/BOND – Documentary evidence from the landlord; ideally a tenancy agreement. Is the property financially sustainable?	
CARE HOME FEES – a copy of the beneficiary's financial assessment, documentary evidence from the local authority regarding their contribution to the fees and evidence from the care home of the placement cost.	

① Useful contacts

SSAFA – The Armed Forces Charity	0800 731 4880
The Royal British Legion	0808 802 8080
BLESMA	0208 590 1124
Veterans UK	0808 191 4218
Blind Veterans UK	0800 389 7979
Sight Scotland Veterans	0131 229 1456
Help For Heroes	0300 303 9888
ABF The Soldiers Charity	0207 901 8900
RE Officers Widows Society	01634 409110
Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League	0203 207 2413
Veterans Aid	0800 012 6867
PoppyScotland	0131 557 2782
Forgotten Veterans UK	0239 225 6738
Not Forgotten Association	0207 730 2400
Combat Stress	0800 138 1619
COBSEO	0207 811 3224/5
Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) (England and Wales)	0800 011 3797
Department for Communities (NI) Bereavement Helpline (funeral grants)	0800 085 2463
Age UK	0800 678 1602
Scottish Veterans Residences	0131 556 0091
Walking with the Wounded	01263 863 900
Royal British Legion Industries Ltd (RBLI)	01622 795900



Contact details

Royal Engineers Association

Ravelin Building

Chatham, Kent

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Royal Engineers Association

01634 847005

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