

Lady Provost visits Whitefoord House



The Lady Provost Elaine Brand visited Whitefoord House in the city's Canongate earlier in the week, where a joint service to help veterans is currently run by housing and homelessness charity Shelter Scotland and the Scottish Veterans Residences (SVR).

The new outreach support service aims to help veterans who may have little experience of independent living to find and sustain a tenancy.

Through the Shelter Scotland and SVR partnership veterans can get help with practical issues such as getting furniture, arranging energy suppliers and finding a GP. As they settle into their new homes they are helped to build confidence, explore their local community and start thinking about re-establishing relationships and access to children.

Joined by Shelter Scotland's Veterans Officer Alison McCrorie and SVR Deputy Chief Executive George Corbett, the Lady Provost met with veterans at Whitefoord House who shared their experiences including returning from conflict, battling post traumatic stress, family breakdown and homelessness.

SVR's Whitefoord House comprises of 82 fully furnished en suite rooms and 11 flats housing veterans aged 22 to 94.

Lady Provost, Elaine Brand, said:- "It is a tragedy that so many brave men and woman who have risked everything in service of their country find themselves alone and without a home.

"It was heartbreaking to hear first hand some of their stories today but it was also encouraging to learn that, through the

partnership between Shelter Scotland and SVR, they have access to the fantastic support offered by staff at Whitefoord House.”

There are 400,000 veterans currently living in Scotland. It is estimated that 5,000 of these are unemployed and a further 5,000 are homeless. Compared to their English and Welsh counterparts, veterans in Scotland are 10% more likely to become homeless and more likely to sleep rough.

Alison McCrorie, Shelter Scotland Veterans Officer, said:-
“Through our work with veterans we know that they can face a very difficult time finding and keeping a home when leaving the armed forces.

“Often they return home to families and homes but the stress and strain of returning from conflict can have a devastating effect and lead to relationship breakdown months or years down the line. It may mean they have to leave the family home with nowhere else to go.

“We know that a safe, secure and affordable home is a critical factor in their progress towards resettlement and getting on with their lives. Through our work with SVR we aim to find better ways to address the complex needs of many veterans and to ensure that appropriate advice and support is available when and where it is needed most.”