

# To the cloud and beyond!



**Establishing a digital network and transferring our data and digital services to The Cloud has been a significant achievement for Scottish Veterans' Residences (SVR), as they endeavour to become a digitally connected organisation.**

The need for SVR's digital evolution was recognised by its Governing Body in 2019. Defined as a strategic objective within their 2020 Business Plan, the intended outcome was "A digitally connected organisation able to communicate, share, and analyse and exploit data securely and effectively." Scottish Veterans planned for a small pilot study, which was anticipated would lead, to a structured rollout across the whole charity. However, this was disrupted by the onset of the pandemic.

Suddenly, there was an urgent need to provide many employees with appropriate IT equipment to enable remote working in order to continue delivering services. Once the dust settled and everyone was equipped, the charity could speak to, and email each other from their homes.

## Scottish Veterans view...

It was apparent, that our 'network' was not joined up. It was clunky, and we were failing to exploit the opportunities offered by the applications we had available. In August 2020, having completed further work to understand where the charity was in relation to achieving the strategic objective, the Governing Body agreed to partner with CAE Technology Services Limited to advise, supply, and configure the infrastructure to create an effective and efficient network.

As our digital infrastructure was brought together, we looked for inspiration and best practice. Attendance on SCVO's Digital Leadership, and SBRC's Cyber Executive programmes, brought significant learning back to the charity, particularly regarding digital inclusion, digital benefits for service-users and staff, and cyber security and resilience. Informed by the learning, we adjusted our plan. By moving our communications and data fully to The Cloud, we recognised

*"As a relatively small charity, with limited IT expertise, partnering with CAE has been fundamental to the successful development and deployment of our digital network. We have better connection with our beneficiaries, and the resilient and secure network allows our staff to work flexibly and remotely."*

Martin Nadin, CEO, Scottish Veterans Residences

we could accommodate more flexible working, be more inclusive for our service-users, and improve data security and cyber resilience.

Following the appointment of an IT Manager, we have improved the Wi-Fi access in our three locations – in Edinburgh, Dundee and Glasgow – seamlessly migrated all our data to The Cloud; rationalised our intranet, and enhanced its functionality; closed down our on-premises servers; and digitalised the telephony across our sites.

Shaun, our IT Manager, is a digital specialist and a Veteran who served for 25 years in the British Army. He has created a vibrant online Information Hub for our Residents which provides a resource that is rich in relevant and interesting content including online courses for digital skills, self-development and education, as well as acting as a notice board and means of communicating with the charity.

## What's next?

Our digital journey has been enlightening, but it is not over, nor is it ever likely to be. We retain ambition to do more. Our next step is to link the data and information within our network so that it automatically produces the reports and returns that we require.

We must continue to develop and improve our digital skills. Since SVR was established in 1910, we have embraced change and progress. We must apply the same approach to our digital network. We have come a long way and can now rightly claim to be a digitally connected organisation; able to communicate and share data securely and effectively.