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## Chairman's Christmas Message - 2017



[Follow this link to a 10 minute video version of this message.](#)

I have had the great privilege of being the Chairman of Cobseo for almost a year now and during the last twelve months I have managed to visit Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as a number of members in England. I have come to understand the full extent of the support provided to the Armed Forces Community by the Service Charity Sector; and it is simply quite remarkable. Supporting those who serve, have served, and their families is rightly the responsibility of government. However, there are gaps and areas where additional support is needed and the Service Charities provide that support across the country in a way which hugely enhances the lives of servicemen, veterans and their dependants. That work is carried out by an army of dedicated staff and volunteers and the Country owes all of you a huge debt.

**Cobseo.** This year the Confederation has grown, as it has done every year since its formation, we now have 292 Members and Associate Members. The work of cooperation and promoting best practise continues. The Newsletter and Jobs Bulletin circulation has grown and provides a forum to promote events and opportunities and to air issues of concern. The Case Management System is being replaced with money granted to Cobseo from Libor and the Poppies at the Tower Installation. SSAFA is the lead and we are grateful for their work on behalf of the sector. The Cluster structure of 11 groupings ranging from Housing to Criminal Justice carries out excellent work, not only sharing best practise but lobbying government, under the Cobseo banner, to change policy.

**Government.** More directly, Cobseo represents your interests to government. We sit on the Covenant Reference Group, the Service Charities Partnership Board, and if you have concerns that you want put to the highest levels of government please do get in touch with the Cobseo team. In the Queen's speech the government introduced The Ministerial Covenant and Veterans Board to improve delivery of the Covenant across Government. Whilst this is a welcome initiative, we were concerned that only Ministers were involved and therefore the third Sector view would be missing. As a result of our concerns, the First Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Defence,

alongside the Minister for Veterans and People will now meet with the Sector representatives from our sector, including Cobseo, on a biannual basis. We hope therefore to be able to shape the Ministerial board agenda; if you have any views please do let us know.

**Covenant.** At the end of each year the government produces a report on the covenant and Cobseo provides independent comment based upon the input we have from our Executive and Clusters. This year we also went out to all of you to ask for your perspectives and we plan to repeat this consultation process in future years. It is our collective opportunity to hold Government to account. This year the report is scheduled to be published on the 18 December and rightly it will highlight areas where progress has been made; Health, Education, Accommodation and raising the profile of the Covenant across the country, however there is a great deal more that needs to be done. [Follow this link to our independent comments which cover broad range of issues](#) but I will highlight four:

**National Perception.** The recent study by Lord Ashcroft into transition illustrated that the nation's perception is that the veterans are damaged by their service either in body or in mind. They are perceived as a burden on society rather than a benefit. This is clearly wrong; servicemen and women are disciplined, flexible, motivated, and good team players. They are exactly the kind of people the country needs, and every business needs. The national perception matters because it could impact upon the value placed upon Service and influence both recruiting, and job opportunities for veterans. Responsibility for changing the national view rests with government and we are delighted that the Ministerial Covenant and Veterans Board has taken on the task. Cobseo stands by to assist in any way that we can.

**Growing Need.** Despite the positive tone of the Covenant Report, we highlighted that the growing membership has experienced an increase in the number of calls for assistance and an increase in their complexity which is a cause for concern. The Covenant Fund project 'Map of Need' will carry out a systematic and objective analysis of the demand which will begin to report in the early part of next year .

**Measuring Outcomes.** The report highlights a series of positive measures which should assist service personnel, veterans and their families. But we would like to see greater emphasis on outputs and outcomes, for example:

- Performance targets set, and the Secretary of State reporting against them.
- Input from Veterans and their families – so that there is scope for a wider peer review mechanism.
- A plan for the coming year which would allow the third sector to engage with government in a more collaborative manner.

**Housing.** Housing needs stand out as a cause for concern for both serving and those in transition. The Families' Federations have articulated clearly their concerns that the Future Accommodation Model could threaten one of the key elements of security which Service brings. We support their concerns and will be following the trials next year closely. Separately we highlighted that too many Service leavers are departing the service without any clear idea of where they will live or a serious conversation about the accommodation options. The Housing Cluster has proposed an Accommodation Transition Programme to mirror the Career Transition Partnership that exists. It will be interesting to see how this develops.



**Veterans Gateway.** There is no doubt that our veterans find the accessing support from the Sector confusing. The creation of the Veterans Gateway earlier this year is therefore a welcome development in providing a point of entry helping those who do not know where to start their search. The Gateway is up and running and I was impressed with the commitment of the staff when I visited the site in Cardiff in early November. There is still a great deal of work to be done as the Gateway develops but I would strongly encourage Cobseo members to sign up either as Information Organisations or to be listed on the Geo –location tool. I will be representing Cobseo at the Veterans Gateway Strategic Group and Ian Caws our Director of Operations will attend the Stakeholder Reference Group. <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/become-veterans-gateway-supporter/>

**The Future.** And finally, a word about the future. Change is always with us but it would seem that the pace of change currently affecting the Armed Forces Community is significant and in some cases fundamental. The size and shape of the Armed Forces has undergone, and continues to undergo, radical change. The effect is not only on the number of serving and retiring personnel, but on the national footprint, support to families, the regular reserve mix and the size and profile of the veterans’ community. All this comes against the backdrop of a reduced military profile: reduced international deployments, a squeeze on public funding, devolution and delegation across government as well as an increase in regulation across all areas of the charitable sector.

In dealing with these multiple new challenges, and longstanding issues, there is no doubt that Service Charities are better able to serve those whom they are pledged to support by working together. Next year will be a full one and we look forward to working with all Cobseo members.

On behalf of all at the Cobseo office in Victoria, to wish you all a safe and successful 2018, and a very Happy Christmas.



## Newsletters

- **Forces Pension Society - to sign up for their newsletter follow this link**
- **Forward Assist – Weekly Newsletter**
- **Naval Families Federation – November Newsletter**
- **RAF Families Federation – Weekly Newsletter**
- **RFEA Newsletter**
- **Spirit of Normandy Trust – Newsletter**
- **Veterans Gateway Newsletter**
- **Veterans in Communities – November Newsletter**
- **Veterans Scotland Newsletter**
- **Walking With The Wounded – Newsletter**

## Jobs

**Follow this link to the 12<sup>th</sup> December Jobs Bulletin**



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## Cobseo diary

### 2018

- 7<sup>th</sup> February Cobseo Communications Clinic – Blind Veterans UK 1400-1700
- 8<sup>th</sup> February Cobseo Finance Committee meeting - Mountbarrow House 1400-1500
- 21<sup>st</sup> February Cobseo Executive Meeting - Mountbarrow House 1000-1500
- 9<sup>th</sup> May Cobseo Finance Committee Meeting - Mountbarrow House 1400-1500
- 23<sup>rd</sup> May Cobseo Executive Meeting - Mountbarrow House 1000-1500
- 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018 AGM – Venue TBC, 1300-1830
- 19<sup>th</sup> September Finance Committee Meeting - Mountbarrow House 1400-1500
- 3<sup>rd</sup> October Cobseo Executive Away Day
- 21<sup>st</sup> November Cobseo Finance Committee Meeting - Mountbarrow House 1400-1500
- 5<sup>th</sup> December Cobseo Executive Meeting - Mountbarrow House 1000-1500

## Useful dates

### Christmas

19<sup>th</sup> December

Sing yourself into a festive cheer with local military charity (Colwyn Bay)

### Military Wives Choirs “Home For Christmas” Tour 2017

- St Michael’s, Tidworth Garrison Church, Wiltshire (16 December)
- Guildford Cathedral (18 December)

### 2018

15<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Forces in Mind Trust sponsored Veterans’ Mental Health Conference 2018

9<sup>th</sup> March -11<sup>th</sup> March

The Mountbatten Festival of Music 2018

20<sup>th</sup> April 2018 (Fri)

Soldiering On Awards - a night to celebrate the Armed Forces Community

Throughout the year - New Military Veterans Training for Peace (PEP)

### Employment

#### RBLI

Upcoming dates of RBLI’s employment support programme for veterans

Upcoming dates of RBLI’s employment support programme for the spouses and partners of Armed Forces personnel

13<sup>th</sup> January

Information & Advice Day

#### X-Forces Events

11<sup>th</sup> January

One 2 One Business Support Surgery

29<sup>th</sup> January

Self-Employment Discovery Workshop (Preston)

7<sup>th</sup> February

Self-Employment Discovery Workshop (Edinburgh)

8<sup>th</sup> February

Self-Employment Discovery (Newcastle)

9<sup>th</sup> February

Self-Employment Discovery (Manchester)

24<sup>th</sup> April

Self-Employment Discovery (Plymouth)

22<sup>nd</sup> May

Self-Employment Discovery (Cardiff)

18<sup>th</sup> June

Self-Employment Discovery (Birmingham)

### Health and Wellbeing

#### Warrior Programme – Residential Courses 2017

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January | Seale Hayne, Newton Abbot

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March | Seale Hayne, Newton Abbot

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April | Seale Hayne, Newton Abbot



The King's Veterans Mental Health Conference

18<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Mission Motorsport

15<sup>th</sup> December

11-14<sup>th</sup> January 18

27<sup>th</sup> February 18

The King's Veterans Mental Health Conference

Donington Park Troops Track Day, Castle Donington East  
Midlands

Autosport International, NEC

Mission Motorsport Anniversary – Goodwood Circuit,  
Chichester.

### Funding

The Veterans' Foundation

15<sup>th</sup> January 2018

For more information about individual grants up to £10k follow  
this link

## Charity Commission News

### Charity Commission – Prepare a charity annual return

You must send an annual return (or update your details) every year if your charity is registered in England or Wales.

Before you start, you'll need:

- your charity's online services password, you can request a new password if needed
- your registered charity number
- registration numbers for any linked charities (if applicable)

[Read more](#)

### Help us reduce insider fraud in charities

The Charity Commission will be working with charities to promote fraud prevention and help them develop anti-fraud cultures.

One of the most damaging types of fraud is insider fraud. This is fraud committed by someone involved with the charity, whether a trustee, an employee or volunteer. [Read more](#)

### Safeguarding is a key governance priority for all charities, says charity regulator

Charity Commission publishes new safeguarding strategy and says safeguarding goes beyond protecting at risk groups

Trustees should take steps to ensure no one who comes into contact with their charity suffers distress or harm, as well as safeguarding children and adults at risk, says regulator of charities.

The Charity Commission's new safeguarding strategy says that safeguarding is a key governance priority for all charities, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk. [Read more](#)

## Cobseo news

### Cobseo Comms Clinic – 7<sup>th</sup> February - Getting coverage in regional media and how to utilise case studies

Blind Veterans UK will be hosting the next Cobseo Communications clinic at their headquarters on 7<sup>th</sup> February at 1400. Regional media coverage is hugely important for charities and organisations, particularly if you're not producing the sort of "new research" that national press likes to hook on to. People also consume their local papers differently with many reading them from cover to cover.

Utilising regional media is a great opportunity for your organisation to reach out to potential supporters and beneficiaries. However, the most important thing to remember with regional media is to make the story relevant to the area. This is where finding the right case studies comes in. This short course will go through some simple ideas and techniques to ensure that you're taking all of your regional media opportunities. Places are on a first come first served basis, please email <mailto:a.farrow@cobseo.org.uk> to reserve your spot.



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## GDPR

### Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 12 steps to take now

This checklist highlights 12 steps you can take now to prepare for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which will apply from 25 May 2018. Many of the GDPR's main concepts and principles are much the same as those in the current Data Protection Act (DPA), so if you are complying properly with the current law then most of your approach to compliance will remain valid under the GDPR and can be the starting point to build from. However, there are new elements and significant enhancements, so you will have to do some things for the first time and some things differently. **Follow this link to the full document.**

## Ministry of Defence news

### Veterans' ID Card

The MOD has provided some information about the Veterans' ID Card story, for further information please contact the Ministry of Defence Media team. Follow this link for the video announcement: <https://www.facebook.com/theministryofdefence/videos/10155827564529034/>

- The MOD is working with the Department for Transport and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to include a Veterans marker on the driving licence for Veterans residing in England, Scotland and Wales. This will be implemented from the early 2020s.
- The MOD is reviewing a range of other options to ensure all Veterans will have a form of identification, including those who don't drive, and those living in Northern Ireland (outside the remit of the DVLA). A further announcement will be made in the New Year.
- In addition to acting as a recognition of Service, it will act as a form of identification. This will ensure that Veterans can be easily identified as part of HMG's continued commitment under the Armed Forces Covenant, when accessing specific support for Healthcare, housing and/or the charitable sector.
- To ensure protection against fraudulent use of any Veterans identification verification will form part of the application process and the MOD intends to include further legislation against any abuse of this system in the next Armed Forces Bill.
- Veterans can currently access retail discounts through the Defence Discount Service – 7,250 companies are signed up and this currently benefits 430,000 members of the Defence community. This excellent scheme will continue and the Veterans ID card is not intended to replace this.
- Note that: the cost to Veterans of any the options will be minimal or nil.

[Blesma](#)



### Blesma's Impact Video for 2017

Follow the link to see Blesma's Impact Video for 2017, filmed at this year's Remembrance Parade in London. It is a brief summary of some of the highlights of what has been achieved over the past 12 months and a taster of what is to come in 2018. **Read more**

### Row2Recovery Team Trident poised to take on 3,000-mile row in Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge

Jordan Beecher and Captain Jon Armstrong are making their final preparations on the Canary Island of La Gomera for what will be an epic row of around 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean that starts tomorrow (12th December).

Jon is a serving officer with the Royal Gurkha Rifles, and Blesma Member Jordan was a Corporal in the Parachute Regiment before being injured in Afghanistan in 2012. He stepped on an IED which resulted in him losing his left leg below the knee. **Read more**



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## Blind Veterans UK



### Do you have what it takes? Blind Veterans UK challenges Sussex residents

Blind Veterans UK is challenging Sussex residents to walk 100km from London to Brighton in 24 hours to raise money for Blind Veterans UK, the national charity for blind and vision-impaired ex-Service men and women. The 100k London to Brighton will take place from 7 – 8 July 2018. It will see participants start off at the Hammersmith and Fulham Rugby Club, before crossing the North Downs, walking via woodland and small villages to Sussex and through the South Downs. [Read more](#)

### Army blind veteran to receive well-deserved break this Christmas thanks to national military charity

Bill Hewson, 91 and from Kingston upon Thames, will spend the festive period with other vision-impaired ex-Service men and women at Blind Veterans UK's Brighton centre for the third time. Every year the charity invites beneficiaries who are in need of respite, like Bill, to spend the week at one of the charity's training and rehabilitation centres. Bill says: "I'll be spending Christmas at the centre with my wife Rita. We've been married for 65 years and I love her very much but now that she has dementia I'm both her husband and her carer.

[Read more](#)

## Depththerapy



### Charity and Dive Centre to Grant Scuba Diver's Last Wish this Christmas

Depththerapy, the charity that seeks to rehabilitate UK Armed Service personnel who have suffered life changing mental and/or physical challenges, and Crowthorne's PADI 5\* dive centre Divecrew, are teaming up to grant a scuba diver his last wish this Christmas.

When Colin Clements and his friend Daphne Pearson walked into Crowthorne-based PADI dive centre Divecrew, no one expected what was to happen next. Colin, 60, from Woodley, Berkshire, is suffering from an aggressive form of brain cancer that will take his life in the near future. [Read more](#)

## Help for Heroes



### Invictus Games athlete takes on extreme, once in a lifetime challenge

47 year old Jamie Weller from Nottingham, who recently brought home four bronze medals from this year's Invictus Games, is taking on a new challenge. The former Navy Aircraft Engineer trekked for 13 days across Nepal on this extreme and once in a life time challenge to reach the base of Mount Everest. The challenge was organised by and raised money for Help for Heroes (H4H).

When Jamie lost his central vision he lost more than just the majority of his eyesight. He lost the ability to pursue his dream of a life in the military. [Read more](#)

## Mission Motorsport



### Mission Motorsport launch Veterans@Heritage Outreach Programme

A new veterans outreach programme has been launched in Bicester by Mission Motorsport. Bicester Heritage is the site of the former WW2 RAF Bomber Station and is now the UK centre of historic motoring with more than 30 classic car related businesses on site. Mission Motorsport has a unit at the site which forms a focal point and veterans community hub. Veterans@ Heritage will meet on the third Wednesday of each month from 0930 to 1230, the next meeting being 17th January 2018. [Read more](#)



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## Not Forgotten Association



### **The Not Forgotten Association's Christmas Party at St. James's Palace**

The annual Not Forgotten Association Christmas Party at St. James's Palace signals the start of the festive season. It almost feels as though the State Apartments' opulent, red and gold setting was designed specifically for Christmas celebrations, as it never fails to put everyone in a mood of great cheer and merriment. Those who visit leave feeling joyful with lasting memories made of a wonderful and very special afternoon.

This year was no exception as nearly 300 guests were hosted by HRH The Duchess of Gloucester, who took a considerable amount of time to meet and talk with many of those in attendance. [Read more](#)

### **A Big Thank You to the Big Lottery Fund**

The NFA were thrilled to receive a grant of £10,000 from the Big Lottery Fund. Their funding will help us continue to entertain veterans and service personnel throughout the Christmas period with our program of Christmas lunches. Each year, the NFA organises 8 Christmas lunches throughout the country. These Christmas events are designed to give a boost to veterans of all ages, to provide companionship with like-minded people, to meet old friends and to make new acquaintances. [Read more](#)

## The Royal British Legion



### **Poppy Pekslot prepares for the PayPal Turkey Dash**

The Royal British Legion is taking part in PayPal's Turkey Dash, an animated charity campaign with Aardman and Channel 4. The Turkey Dash will see eight CGI charity turkeys take part in a prime time race, which will be broadcast on Channel 4 during the first ad break of Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast, starting at 8pm on Friday 15th December. [Read more](#)

## Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity



### **Princess Royal Commends Supporters of the RNRMC at London Reception**

The hard work and commitment of Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) supporters was celebrated with a presentation by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne.

As the national charity of the Royal Naval Service, the RNRMC is reliant upon a vital network of loyal supporters who help ensure it achieves its charitable goals.

The Supporters Reception, hosted at Trinity House in London, celebrated the commitment undertaken by the charity's volunteers, fundraisers and corporate sponsors.

As Patron of the RNRMC, HRH Princess Anne was in attendance to award a select group of supporters with framed achievement certificates that recognised their individual efforts. [Read more](#)

### **Charity's Advent Calendar Offers Exciting Xmas Giveaways**

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) have created a festive advent calendar that gives supporters a chance to win a selection of charity giveaways. Participants of the charity's generous seasonal giveaway have 15 opportunities to win an array of Royal Navy and Royal Marines themed gifts.

By visiting the charity's website, entrants can simply click open the doors to the RNRMC advent calendar to be in with a chance to win items such as; an HMS Queen Elizabeth Xmas Tree Decoration, famous RNRMC Carrier Bag, Festive Sports Top, Sailor's Cushion, Beer and Band CDS amongst many others wonderful items. [Read more](#)



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## Royal Star and Garter Homes



### Veterans and toddlers share festive fun

With Christmas just around the corner, disabled veterans at The Royal Star & Garter Homes welcomed babies and toddlers to a fun-filled, Christmas themed multi-sensory class held at the Charity's Solihull Home. Residents were invited to join in the festive fun alongside the youngsters. The class was run by Hartbeeps, as part of an ongoing partnership between the Solihull Home and the local group to help bring generations together. [Read more](#)

## Soldiering On Awards



### Merry Christmas from the Soldiering on Awards team!

As well as celebrating our very special 2017 award-winners, our Soldiering on Awards Christmas card also contains an important notice – the date we will be announcing the 2018 Awards Finalists – 10th January 2018 – The Soldiering on Awards team wish you all seasonal good cheer and a very Happy New Year! [Read more](#)

## SSAFA



### SSAFA WWII Veterans walk the red carpet at Darkest Hour film premiere

Damaris Media and SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity join forces for 'Darkest Hour' premiere  
Damaris Media and SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, have partnered on the release of Darkest Hour (in cinemas 12th January). To celebrate, two of SSAFA's WWII veterans were given the red carpet treatment at the premiere on 11 December before watching the film. Both veterans attend the SSAFA Southend Veteran's Club, which runs every Thursday. [Read more](#)

### SSAFA adopted families celebrate Christmas at 10 Downing Street

Christmas came early on Monday, when the doors of 10 Downing Street were opened for a special Children's Party. Joining the festive celebrations were two military families who adopted through SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity. Attendees included an Army veteran and his partner and a RAF family. Both couples adopted two siblings, a boy and a girl in 2014 and have continued to be supported by SSAFA's Post-Adoption Support service. The children are aged 7, 8, 9 and 10 years old. [Read more](#)

### Christmas cheer for SSAFA veterans, thanks to ESS

Special festive lunch donated to military community in Southend  
Christmas came early today for members of the SSAFA Veteran's Lunch Club. Professional chefs armed with roast turkey and all of the trimmings descended to serve up a large helping of seasonal goodwill. The Lunch Club welcomed over 60 veterans in for the special event, making it a real calendar highlight. In the true spirit of Christmas, the entire meal was donated by ESS, Support Services Worldwide, part of Compass Group, to say thank you for their service to our nation. [Read more](#)



## Veterans Aid



### New home for Veterans Aid

Veterans Aid, the UK's frontline operational charity for veterans in crisis, has moved to new headquarters. From Monday 11th December 2017, after 12 years in Buckingham Palace Road, the charity will be operating from 27 Victoria Square, SW1W 0RB, just yards away from its old premises. Number 27 is the latest in a series of properties that have provided a base for the charity's activities during its 85-year-history. [Read more](#)

## Walking With the Wounded



### Footprints in the Snow: Jamie Lawson's new video has launched!

The brand new video for Jamie Lawson's Christmas single, 'Footprints In The Snow', is finally here! Thank you to Jamie who is supporting our #WalkingHomeForChristmas campaign. Join Jamie by going for ANY walk this December and ensure that our ex-servicemen and women who are homeless, unemployed or struggling with their mental health get the support they need to regain their independence. [Read more](#)

## Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust



### HMS Collingwood spoils for choice at WRNS festive sale

Personnel across HMS Collingwood were treated to cakes and other home-made goodies at the Base's annual WRNS BT Festive Sale. The Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) celebrated its centenary on 29th November 2017 and events have been going on all year to commemorate this Anniversary, the women who served throughout this time, and their remarkable achievements. Five volunteers from The Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust (WRNS BT) visited HMS Collingwood to tempt sailors and civilians alike with brownies, malt loaves, cakes, biscuits and even jars of marmalade, all home-made by ten talented members. [Read more](#)

## X-Forces



### 11th January 2018 – One 2 One Business Support Surgery

Thursday 11th January  
2018, 09:00 – 17:30

Are you considering self-employment or already run your own business?

Join an X-Forces business start-up experts for a 90 minute one to one session to discuss your next steps. To book call: 0800 3689533. [Read more](#)

### Self-Employment Discovery

Whether you've already started working on your business idea, or are just considering self-employment, come along to our business workshop and meet like-minded people.

This practical workshop will take you through the pros and cons of self-employment. Working both as a group and individually, you will gain an awareness of what starting up a business means; to you, your family, and your finances.

By the end of this one-day workshop you will have a better idea of what starting a business entails, and have a clear understanding of what support is on offer, so you can plan your next steps.

Follow the links below to book your place:

- [24th April – Self-Employment Discovery \(Plymouth\)](#)
- [22nd May – Self-Employment Discovery \(Cardiff\)](#)
- [18th June – Self-Employment Discovery \(Birmingham\)](#)

