

Erskine News

A Scotland in which all Veterans and their families are honoured, valued and respected and where exceptional care and support empower them to maximise their potential quality of life.



Issue 40, Spring 2025

80 YEARS SINCE VE DAY!



Share in the celebration! - 8th May
Skip to pages 8-11 to read more on this historical day.

Welcome

As we reflect on the remarkable milestone of 80 years since VE Day and gradually approach the 110th anniversary of Erskine, we find ourselves at a powerful moment to honour both our history and our ongoing mission.

Eight decades have passed since the jubilant celebrations marking the end of World War II in Europe. Those scenes of relief and joy came at an immense cost - one that Veterans knew all too well. It was this understanding of sacrifice that helped establish Erskine's foundation nearly 110 years ago, born from the recognition that those who served deserve exceptional care and support in return.

Throughout our journey, Erskine has evolved while remaining steadfast to our core purpose. What began as a response to the devastating injuries of the First World War has grown into a comprehensive support system for Veterans of all conflicts and their families. Our work spans care, housing, employment assistance and the equally vital emotional support that helps heal invisible wounds.



None of this would be possible without you, our dedicated supporters. Your generosity, whether through donations, volunteering, or simply sharing our story, forms the backbone of our charity.

As we commemorate these significant anniversaries, we also look forward. The needs of the Veteran community continue to evolve, and with your support, Erskine will continue adapting to meet them.

Thank you for standing with us as we enter this historic year. Together, we ensure that the legacy of service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Erin Ewing
Supporter Development Officer

Meet The Team!



Alison Payne
Edinburgh Home Manager

I've worked in the Erskine Edinburgh Home for 14 years now and can't imagine working anywhere else. Starting as a RN on the floor and worked my way quickly up to Home Manager, a role I had never considered doing.

You don't have to have care experience or be a Veteran to work in Erskine. We will provide you with training which is second to none. Every member of staff has taken a different path before going down the Erskine road.



John Booth
Catering Manager

Nearly 20 years ago I was working for an agency and was given a shift to work at The Erskine Home. I did my shift and never left.

All these years later I still really enjoy my job as Catering Manager. No two days are the same and I meet so many different people. I am very fortunate to have a great team around me. We are all likeminded, working to the common goal of caring for our residents.



Anne Creelman
Centre Supervisor

I started as a volunteer serving meals in the Erskine Care Home and moved to ERMAC when it opened.

I then worked as a catering assistant, took on the role of Wellbeing Project Co-ordinator where I was involved in catering and activities, and I am now Centre Supervisor. I look forward to welcoming new members, having day to day contact with our members and getting to know all of them is a real highlight.

There are many different roles within Erskine and each one is taken on by an amazing individual offering their skills and knowledge to help continue to make Erskine's care of the highest standard.



We're proud to care and are looking for people to join us who are proud to care too.
Scan the QR Code to view our current vacancies.

Our Services

We care, accommodate and support.

Care

Our residential care homes are sanctuaries of comfort, providing:

- Specialised nursing care
- Dedicated dementia support
- Compassionate end-of-life services

With 220 rooms across our Bishopton and Edinburgh homes, we ensure every Veteran and/or their spouse receives personalised, loving care that honours their service and preserves their dignity.

Community

Both ERMAC and EVAC North are vibrant communities where Veterans:

- Reconnect with fellow service members
- Discover new passions
- Learn exciting skills
- Access vital support services

Here, shared experiences become the foundation for continued growth, friendship and personal exploration.

Accommodation

We understand that leaving military service can be challenging. Our support spans:

Transitional Supported Accommodation

- 23 apartments designed to ease the shift to civilian life
- Supportive environment helping Veterans reintegrate successfully

Independent Living

- 44 family cottages providing stable, comfortable homes
- 5 Assisted Living Apartments supporting independence

Recovery and Rehabilitation

- Accommodation and support for the Army Personnel Recovery Centre. Supporting service personnel during recovery
- Comprehensive support for those healing and transitioning



 **220**
ENSUITE ROOMS ACROSS TWO
HOMES IN BISHOPTON AND
EDINBURGH

44 
VETERAN FAMILY
COTTAGES

5 
ASSISTED LIVING
APARTMENTS

23 
TRANSITIONAL
SUPPORTED
APARTMENTS



**HOW
OLD** 
RESIDENTS FROM
26-103


1419
PODIATRY
INTERVENTIONS


9000
HOURS OF
VOLUNTEERING

WE HAVE
CARED FOR
105,000
VETERANS SINCE 1916

* In 2024

A Garden of
Hope and Healing

A DREAM DELAYED, BUT NOT DEFEATED

We've experienced a remarkable journey with the Yarrow House Garden project! What began as a vision in 2019 has blossomed into a truly transformative space for our Veterans living with dementia.

When we first received the incredible £180,000 grant from the Mr & Mrs JMB Trust, along with additional support from the Chancellor's Libor Funds, we were filled with excitement. Little did we know that a global pandemic would test our resolve. But at Erskine, we never give up.

Late last summer, we proudly opened a garden that is so much more than just green space. It's a carefully designed sanctuary that

empowers our residents, offering: gentle winding pathways, restful seating areas, and sensory illumination.

Our Director of Care, Derek Barron, captured the essence of this project: *"Without the kindness of our supporters, this would have remained an inaccessible piece of ground. Now, we have a fully functional and safe area that opens up a whole new world for our residents."*



Women's Wellbeing

A Space for
Support &
Connection

"The group has helped me come out of my shell - I've made great friendships."

With support from the Veterans' Foundation, ERMAC now hosts twice monthly Women's Wellbeing sessions providing female Veterans, spouses and carers with a safe, supportive space to connect, share and grow.

The sessions feature a variety of activities, including: art & crafts, crocheting, beauty & holistic therapy, line dancing, women's gym sessions, genealogy & day trips as well as helping to organise centre events like Remembrance and the Christmas Fayre.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of participants reporting improved health and wellbeing.



Reconnecting Through Nature

A £5,000 donation from the B&Q Foundation helped develop the Veterans' Community Garden, transforming unused land into a flourishing allotment.

Growing more than just plants, Veterans have:

- cultivated flowers, vegetables, and their own confidence
- reduced isolation and improved quality of life through gardening

In September, 25 Veterans took part in Forest Week, hosted by Treeline.

Sessions focused on outdoor skills and mental restoration, featuring: Shelter building & wood chopping, campfire cooking, mindful tea drinking, outdoor art classes. Veterans also visited Ardgowan Estate for a foraging workshop, even sampling nettle cookies - a unique new experience!



VE and VJ Day



A timeline of events

30th April 1945

Hitler's successor, Grand Admiral Dönitz, sought to negotiate Germany's surrender while aiming to save German soldiers from Soviet capture.

4th May 1945

British Field Marshal, Bernard Montgomery, received a German delegate at Luneburg Heath east of Hamburg. Montgomery accepted the unconditional surrender of German forces in the Netherlands, northwest Germany and Denmark.

7th May 1945

In Reims, France, Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower, met with General Alfred Jodl. General Jodl signed the unconditional surrender of all German forces to General Eisenhower, effective the next day.

8th May 1945

Soviet leader, Josef Stalin, insisted on a separate ceremony, where German Field Marshal William Keitel signed another surrender document in Berlin. Dönitz's strategy succeeded as millions of German soldiers surrendered to Allied forces.

26th July 1945

The US, Britain and the Allies met in Potsdam, Germany, and issue an ultimatum to Japan. A demand for the unconditional surrender of Japanese forces or face "prompt and utter destruction".

6th August 1945

Having ignored the ultimatum and therefore refusing to end the war, the US (with Allied approval) dropped the first of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima.

9th August 1945

The second atomic bomb was dropped over Nagasaki and the Soviet Union declares war on Japan. Both of these factors put further pressure on the Japanese government.

14th - 15th August 1945

Six days later the Japanese government informs the Allies that it will accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. Emperor Hirohito announces the surrender to the country.

2nd September 1945

Representatives of the Japanese Empire and the Allies came together on the USS Missouri, anchored in Tokyo Bay, to sign the surrender agreement.

A Nation Unleashed: Britain Erupts in Celebration

The moment news broke on the 7th May Britain couldn't wait another second. After enduring the crushing weight of war - where even the clothes on their backs were rationed, where darkness was mandatory, and where the terrifying wail of air raid sirens punctuated everyday life - the country exploded into spontaneous celebration.

Almost overnight, streets transformed as vibrant bunting and fluttering flags brought colour back to a nation that had lived under grey skies of restriction. Villages hummed with excitement, towns buzzed with joy, and cities pulsed with newfound freedom.

As VE Day approached, the celebrations only intensified. Bonfires crackled against twilight skies, lighting up faces that hadn't known such unbridled happiness in years. Strangers became dancing partners in streets that had once been empty during blackouts. And pubs - those quintessential British sanctuaries - overflowed with laughter and raised glasses as people toasted to peace, to survival, and to tomorrow.

On the 8th May, 1945, Britain declared a national holiday.

The Prime Minister, Churchill, secured promises of adequate beer supplies from the Ministry of Food while the Board of Trade allowed purchase of red, white and blue bunting without ration coupons. Commemorative items like 'VE Day' mugs appeared quickly, and some restaurants created special 'victory' menus.

Celebrations included parades, thanksgiving services, and street parties as communities united in celebration. London's St. Paul's Cathedral hosted ten consecutive thanksgiving services, each drawing thousands.



Image: IWM HU140150

Victory in Europe Day



Scotland's Celebrations

In Scotland, celebrations took on their own character. Yes sir, we can boogie!

The National Records of Scotland have noted massive crowds gathered in Edinburgh, particularly along Princes Street and at the Mound where thousands assembled.

The Glasgow Herald reported over 100,000 people flooded George Square, where celebrations continued well past midnight despite light rain.

One Veteran recalls: *"Glasgow was bursting with excitement everyone knew the war was over but awaited the official confirmation.*

Finally on 8th May 1945 it came - the voice of Winston Churchill over the radio: 'Although the enemy in the Far East has yet to be conquered, the war in Europe is now over, God Save The King.' That was the cue for the city of Glasgow to celebrate. Schools were closed for the day. It was a day of celebration! In Glasgow the main and immediate celebration was in the city's George Square".

In Aberdeen, the Aberdeen Press and Journal documented how fishing boats in the harbor sounded their horns in unison at noon.

Another Veteran remembers standing at the top of Union Street watching the Polish troops leaving the northern city. Everyone lined the streets to say goodbye as the soldiers had been very popular with locals. The atmosphere was bouyant, very happy, elated.

In smaller towns and villages across the Highlands, communities held ceilidhs that continued through the night.



Image: IWM HU49482



Image: IWM EA65885

However, many thousands of lives were changed forever and for those people, celebrations were put on hold. Some, for a lifetime.

In 2023 a long time supporter of ours reached out to share her family's heartbreaking wartime story involving a bottle of whisky.

"Dad was a manager in a licensed grocers when he was called up in 1942. My brothers and I were very young; I'm sandwiched between the boys, an older brother of 2 years and a younger of 4 years.

When dad left for the war our mother was given a bottle of whisky to be kept for a his homecoming.

Sadly that day never came.

Mr and Mrs Fulton



The gifted bottle.

My brothers and I would ask our mother when dad was coming home and she would say 'Soon.'

I realise now that she couldn't bring herself to tell us that dad had been killed; and she never did. As time went on we worked it out for ourselves.

She was a remarkable woman who took on dad's job at the grocers, raised the three of us on her own and kept hold of the whisky.

The bottle of John Crabbie's & Co has remained unopened, survived numerous house moves and in my parents memories I decided to donate it to Erskine."

After chatting through a few options the supporter agreed the much cherished bottle was to be put up for auction at our annual Erskine Ball.

It helped raise over £42,000 on the night.

We'd love to read your VE ay memories family stories and authentic wartime ration recipes.

Scan here to get started.



SUPPORT AT HOME RAF VETERAN, IAN WEIR

Ian, 88, began his 29-year Royal Air Force career at age 23, starting with Aircrew Selection in Hornchurch, Essex. He served as a navigator with postings throughout the UK and abroad, including a 30-month tour in Malta and 17 years at RAF Kinloss. He later became a navigation lecturer and spent time at RAF Pitreavie Castle. After retiring from the RAF at 52, he continued in aviation, training airline pilots at British Aerospace's Flight Training College in Prestwick.

In 1957, Ian married Agnes (who adopted the unique name "Annis" due to workplace circumstances). Together they raised three children: son John and twins Anne and Jamie.

When Annis developed mobility issues in 2020, they moved to a retirement flat near their daughter in Paisley.

Support at Home gives you back a bit of your old self - a reason to get up and get on with the day. It's more than just a visit. It's knowing someone cares enough to show up.



Annis later moved into The Erskine Home in Bishopton, which Ian visits regularly. Through these visits, Ian learned about the Support at Home program and was paired with Robert, a volunteer who visits weekly. Their Thursday meet-ups – often spent playing cards and dominoes – have rekindled memories of Ian's RAF days, when card games filled the downtime between duties.



LEAVE A LEGACY

"One day, with your help, Erskine will be there for me."

Angus, age 5.

When it comes to planning for the future writing a Will is often thought of as a difficult task, but it's also one of the most meaningful things you can do. By talking with someone and breaking it down into manageable steps it allows you to express your values, share your story, and ensure that your wishes are honoured.

Leaving a gift in your Will to Veterans is a unique way you can leave a legacy of hope and support for those who have given so much for our country.

Your contribution can provide vital services, from essential care to social activities that foster community and belonging. Imagine the comfort of knowing that your generosity will help provide a safe place for Veterans in Scotland to call home or dedicated nursing care, or a listening ear for those who have bravely served.

Kenneth Hill, a former Special Boat Service personnel, said *"I can't say thank you enough for the support that Erskine showed me after my time in the Falklands. After a hospital stay, I came to Erskine and they helped put me back together."* Ken's experience of PTSD and adapting back to civilian life was much harder than anticipated, but Erskine provided him a safe haven.

He has decided to repay that kindness with a Gift in his Will.

Would you consider a gift that costs you nothing today, but helps us to be there for our Veterans when they need us?

Our Legacy Development Manager **Sarah Morgan** is always on hand and happy to chat if you have any questions.

E sarah.morgan@erskine.org.uk
T 0141 814 4520

Free Will Writing

We've partnered with the National Free Wills Network to offer our supporters the opportunity to write or update your Will for free, with a local solicitor.



**NATIONAL
FREE WILLS
NETWORK**



A DAY OF COLLABORATION & INNOVATION

Back in March we hosted our first Corporate Day of 2025! The event brought together representatives from diverse industries to build connections, share ideas, and support our vital work for Veterans.

The atmosphere was electric as corporate partners engaged in creative activities while networking. The LEGO building challenge revealed thoughtful representations of Erskine's mission and values. These physical constructions became powerful metaphors for the real-world support structures we're building together for Veterans.

It was an honour to welcome representatives from organisations that have stood by Erskine for over 30 years, alongside those just beginning their journey with us. Together, we can make a real difference. Throughout the morning, it was inspiring to see the connections formed - between small but mighty family-run businesses and larger multinational corporations - all united by a shared commitment: supporting Scotland's Veterans.

Thank you to everyone who joined us, developing our shared relationships and building a future for the Brave, together.

"The depth of meaning, collaboration, and heart in the room was immeasurable. This is just the beginning of what promises to be an exciting new chapter in Erskine's corporate engagement strategy." - Caitlin Brown, Corporate and Partnership Fundraiser



PARTNERSHIPS IN MOTION

The success of the event has solidified plans to make Corporate Days a recurring fixture in our calendar. So much so, we're pleased to announce that another Corporate Day is already being planned for later this year!

This commitment to regular corporate engagement reflects our belief that sustainable support for Veterans requires ongoing dialogue and relationship-building with our business partners.

The next Corporate Day will build upon the foundations laid, with expanded activities, networking opportunities, and collaborative workshops designed to deepen connections between corporate supporters and Erskine.



JOIN OUR CORPORATE FAMILY

If you feel your organisation can make a meaningful difference to the lives of Veterans, be it through:

- professional expertise
 - strategic partnerships
 - social impact
 - gifts in kind
- we'd love to hear from you.

Your company will be joining a distinguished community of forward-thinking businesses committed to supporting Veterans while gaining unique opportunities for enhanced productivity through joint projects and shared objectives, promote positive health and well being of employees and create employment opportunities for Veterans of working age.

For more information about corporate partnership opportunities please contact our Corporate and Partnerships Fundraiser, **Caitlin Brown:**

E caitlin.brown@erskine.org.uk
T 0141 814 4669

BOWLS SCOTLAND

Proudly stepping into year three of a champion partnership.



£70,000 raised by Bowling Clubs for Erskine's Veterans.

We are thrilled to continue this wonderful partnership with Bowls Scotland, extending our collaboration on the monthly E-Newsletter for another 12 months. This partnership, which has proven both meaningful and impactful, highlights the strong connection between sporting communities and Veteran support.

Launched in June 2016, the E-Newsletter has flourished, reaching over 3,600 subscribers. A vital communication channel, it provides monthly updates and key information to bowling clubs and members across Scotland.

Kareena Cuthbert, Bowls Scotland's Head of High Performance Bowls, highlighted the partnership's significance: *"Erskine is the finest Veterans charity in Scotland. Our collaboration has not only supported an incredible cause but has also engaged our clubs in meaningful community support."*

The continued partnership promises to:

- Raise awareness about Veterans' support
- Provide updates on Erskine's community driven initiatives
- Showcase the incredible work of bowling clubs, volunteers, and staff

Together, we continue to make a difference.

For more information about partnership opportunities, like this one, please contact our Corporate and Partnerships Fundraiser, **Caitlin Brown**:

E caitlin.brown@erskine.org.uk
T 0141 814 4669

Main picture: Erskine Veteran, Bill McDowall and Bowls Scotland's 2014 Commonwealth Games competitor Billy Allan - along with fellow Veteran, Mary Wilson, of Bowls Scotland's High Performance programme.

Become a Hero FOR Heroes



Not all heroes wear capes; but a lot do wear purple Erskine t-shirts!

There are still seven months left in 2025. That's 245 days to transform your goals into impact.

Lace up those trainers and conquer 26.2 miles. Feel your heart race as you zip slide across the Clyde. Join thousands of fellow fundraisers in the legendary Kiltwalk, where every step makes an even bigger impact. Paint your workplace purple with a vibrant theme day that gets everyone talking.

These are just a few ways you can create unforgettable memories while supporting our Veterans and their families. Every mile you run, every brave descent you make, and every splash of purple you wear helps fund unrivalled care and support for Veterans at Erskine.

Want to do something different? Let your imagination run wild!

Whether you're planning a quiet coffee morning or hiking a mountain, your fundraising adventure will make a real difference in the lives of those who've served our country.

Join our community of incredible fundraisers today – because having fun never felt so meaningful!

Start your adventure today

EMF, Edinburgh	24th/25th May
Kiltwalk, Aberdeen	1st June
Tough Mudder, Queensferry	7th June
Men/Womens 10k, Glasgow	15th June
Great Glencoe Challenge	5th July
Kiltwalk, Dundee	17th August
Scottish 1/2 Marathon & 10k	17th August
Ziplide the Clyde, Glasgow	22nd August
Great North Run, Newcastle	7th September
Kiltwalk, Edinburgh	14th September
Men/Womens 10k, Edinburgh	21st September
Loch Ness Marathon	28th September
Great Scottish Run, Glasgow	5th October
Forth Road Bridge Supernova	1st November

If you have a different event in mind please do get in touch. We're here to help!

E community@erskine.org.uk

A Promise Unchanged: Supporting Veterans Through Time

Imagine holding a piece of history in your hands – a newspaper clipping from 1945, its brittle edges telling a story of hope, resilience, and unwavering commitment to those who served.

In the aftermath of World War II, Erskine's call for support was stark and straightforward. Back then, £300,000 was an astronomical sum – a lifeline for Veterans returning from the most devastating conflict in human history.

Fast forward to 2025, and the numbers may have changed, but the heart of our mission remains the same. That £300,000 from 1945? It would be equivalent to nearly £11 million today – a testament to the rising cost of providing comprehensive care for our Veterans.

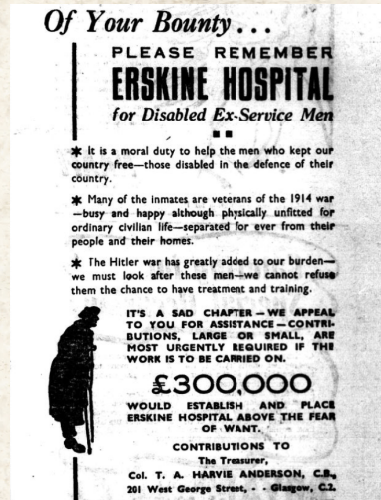
A Continuing Legacy

Today, Erskine faces a similar challenge. We must raise £10 million to continue our critical support for Veterans. But this isn't just about money – it's about:

- Honouring those who sacrificed everything
- Providing dignity in later life
- Ensuring no Veteran is left behind

What hasn't changed since 1945 is our commitment. The language might be different, the world might have transformed, but the core of our mission remains crystal clear: to support those who have served our country.

From the battlefields of 1945 to the care homes of 2025, our promise endures.



Of Your Bounty...
PLEASE REMEMBER

ERSKINE HOSPITAL for Disabled Ex-Service Men

- It is a moral duty to help the men who kept our country free – those disabled in the defence of their country.

- Many of the inmates are Veterans of the 1914 war – busy and happy although physically unfitted for ordinary civilian life – separate for ever from their people and their homes.

- The Hitler war has greatly added to our burden – we must look after these men – we cannot refuse them the chance to have treatment and training.

IT'S A SAD CHAPTER – WE APPEAL TO YOU FOR ASSISTANCE – CONTRIBUTIONS, LARGE OR SMALL, ARE MOST URGENTLY REQUIRED IF THE WORK IS TO BE CARRIED ON

£300,000

Yes, I want to share my bounty with Veterans at Erskine today

1 Your Details

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

2 Please accept my gift of

Thank you! To save money a thank you letter will not be sent. Please tick if you would like to receive one. ☐

3 Did you know the taxman can care for Veterans too?

If you are a UK taxpayer, let us know and we can boost your donation by 25% at no extra cost to you.

giftaid it

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations to Erskine that I make in the future or have made in the past four years. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below and insert today's date: I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 I have given.

I am a taxpayer ☐

Signature Date

4 Donation Payment

I enclose my cheque made payable to Erskine
or please debit my Visa/Mastercard/Maestro/CAF Charity Card

Card No.
Start Date Expiry Date Security No. (Last 3 digits)
Signature Today's Date

5 Please send me information about leaving a gift to Erskine in my Will. ☐

Erskine Veterans Village, Bishopton, Renfrewshire, PA7 5PU Telephone 0141 814 4616 | erskine.org.uk
Erskine Veterans Charity | Company No. SC174103 | Registered Charity No. SC006609
The Erskine Home, Erskine Veterans Village, Bishopton, PA7 5PU

Yes, I'd like to make a difference via Direct Debit

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

I would like to make a regular gift of: £8 ☐ £12 ☐ Other £

I would like this gift to be made: Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually ☐

Please start my payments on: 1st ☐ 15th ☐ _____
(insert month/year)

**Instruction to your Bank or
Building Society to pay
by Direct Debit**



Please fill in the form and send to:
Fundraising Department, Erskine, Bishopton, PA7 5PU

Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
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Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

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Branch Sort Code

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Bank/Building Society Account Number

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Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Erskine Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with Erskine and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Service User Number

7	0	6	3	7	7
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Signature(s)

Date

Reference

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

Please cut here

